

異世界食堂

Isekai Shokudo

1

Junpei Inuzuka

犬塚惇平

illustration

エナミカツミ



THE OTHER WORLD DINING HALL

– Isekai Shokudou –

- Volume 1 -

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[Translated by: Youshoku Translations|fox's coffee time]

– SYNOPSIS –

There is a certain restaurant in the first basement level of a multi-tenant building in one corner of a shopping street near the office district.

The historical 70-year-old restaurant, marked by a sign with a picture of a cat, is called “Western Cuisine Nekoya.”

This restaurant looks completely normal through the week, but on Saturdays, it opens in secret exclusively to some very unique guests.

During these hours, doors in various areas of a parallel world open to allow customers of many different races and cultures into the restaurant.

This “Restaurant to Another World” and its food hold an exotic charm to these highly diverse customers.

This is a story of the heartwarming, once-in-a-lifetime encounters between our reality and another world, between the restaurant’s customers and its owner, and the food shared among them all.

異世界 食堂 1

Isekai Shokudo



每次打開這扇繪有貓咪圖案的門，
我都會覺得很興奮。

「那邊」擁有這麼棒的店面，
「這邊」的入口卻只有門而已。

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雖然店內沒有窗戶，但依然十分明亮整潔，充滿舒適感。
經過細心保養的一排排桌椅也閃閃發光。

儘管店長說「在『我那邊』只是普通的店」，
但這裡對我們來說可是仙境！
不難理解大家為何會喜愛這裡。



我尋找店長的身影，發現他和平常一樣在廚房備料。
「特別營業」的日子，他一個人打理店內大小事。

好厲害！

店長是個溫柔、純樸又可靠的人。
他的料理真的能讓人幸福。





說到這個，店長第一次為我做的早餐套餐。

那個味道實在令人難忘！

每次回想起來，都會有種溫柔又幸福的感覺。

異世界食堂的客人們非常有個性。
有些人是冒險者，有些人是貴族。

精靈、戰士和魔法師也是常客。
就連長得像龍的女王大人都喜愛這裡。

看見大家享用料理時的驚訝表情，
我也會跟著感到高興。

今天會有哪些客人
上門光顧呢？



Introduction

isekai-shokudo 1

每個星期六是「特別營業」。是這邊的世界和那邊的世界

相連的日子。只要打開繪有貓咪圖案的門，

就能享用許多在「異世界」前所未見的料理。

炸肉餅、薑汁燒肉、咖哩飯……

就連什錦燒和巧克力聖代都有。

「貓咪西餐廳」。

今天也有許多充滿個性的人們，

為了追求驚喜來到這裡。

——大受歡迎的網路小說《異世界食堂》

終於成書。很榮幸獲得眾多「何時要出書？」

的詢問，而今天好不容易要開店了。

愈讀愈令人食指大動。

減肥中的讀者請小心!!



異世界食堂

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異世界食堂

Isekai Shokudo

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PROLOGUE

DURING PREPARATIONS

It's been about ten years since I inherited this restaurant from my dead grandpa.

I wouldn't go as far as to say that it's a flower of the city, but at the very least, it's within the neighborhood of the number one growing city's business district.

From there, it wouldn't even take you three minutes by foot to reach the shopping district.

One thing to note about the shopping district is that there are a variety of restaurants lined up there. Every day during lunchtime, all the salarymen and office ladies wanting lunch rush towards the building closest to the entrance of this shopping district. A building with three floors above ground and one floor below. One floor below a building with an eye-catching sign with a winged dog. That's where my restaurant is.

My restaurant's name is the 'Western Style Cathouse*.' It had an unusual black oak door with a brass, vintage handle. That door with a beckoning cat with one front leg raised drawn on it was like a sign.

My grandpa, who between dogs and cats would absolutely choose cats, started this restaurant about fifty years ago, and I, who if you gave the choice would choose dogs, inherited the shop from him. In this shopping district, this place would be considered an old one.

Even though I say that, our western style menu has a very splendid selection. In the menu that that has been increasing from grandpa's time to now there are a lot of dishes that are obviously not western style.

In the past, around the time I got out of college and I started to help out around the restaurant, I asked my grandpa why it turned out that way. Grandpa wasn't born in Japan but instead the mainland. Around the time the war was recently over, Grandpa, who had no relatives whatsoever, came to Japan with nothing but the clothes on his back. I don't know if it was the truth or not but he was someone with no ties to the

past. Because of that, my grandpa who somehow or other started to become more and more Japanese stressed this to me.

“Western style food means that it’s food that came from the other side of the ocean, right? In other words, if it was never in Japan to begin with, you could call it all western style food. And well, there’s you know that. It doesn’t matter what a restaurant decides to call what kind of restaurant they are. As long as their food is good then it’s fine.”

By the way, the daily special on that day’s lunch menu was Japanese braised pork belly**. My grandfather set aside some of the braised pork belly we made for today, and then heartily piled the fatty, sweet cuts of meat on a bowl of rice while he said that. Because of that I remember that I thought ‘so that’s how it is’ and was deeply convinced without thinking.

...Well because of that, we normally put dishes that aren’t western style in our menu for fun. Of course, Grandpa’s specialty and mine are western style dishes.

Also, even then we have quite the good reputation you know. The flavor of the food that grandpa prepares is, of course, catered towards the appetites of hungry, young people with our all-you-can-eat rice, bread and soup. By the way, the priciest thing on the menu is only 1000 yen simply because that’s how my grandpa and I do things. Thankfully, it’s a battlefield with all of the nearby salarymen during the day on weekdays, the salarymen coming home from work, and the poor students who see the all-you-can-eat bread and rice, I make enough profit for myself to eat without worries even with all the expenses.

This is- once my grandpa’s restaurant- now my restaurant, The Western Style Cathouse. Business hours are 11:00 to 15:00 for lunchtime and 17:00 to 21:00 for dinner time. We’re closed on the two days of the weekend due to the lack of office workers in the business district. The number of tables is ten, and especially when it’s crowded, people ask others to share a table with them. Well, I think that about covers it. If I had to say so myself, this was an average restaurant that you could find anywhere.

...Aah, but there’s one thing. There’s one thing that other restaurants don’t have.

One time a week, every Saturday. The Western Style Cathouse has a special sale. Huh? Isn't the restaurant supposed to be closed on Saturdays? That's right. That's why it's a special sale. We can't have customers from 'this side' come in during this special sale so superficially the restaurant is closed. If not, then I could see a lot of troubling things happening. Even though I say that, I don't really know the specifics. It was about thirty years ago, around the time I just got into elementary school, that my grandpa started this special sale. He probably knew a lot, my grandpa. Before he could tell me the details, he suddenly went and passed on.

Well, a while back he said, "When I die, I'm giving the restaurant to you. That's why when I'm dead, I want you to be the one next to continue this special sale," and forced me into this. Even now, I still continue doing this special sale, and I'm not really curious as to what kind of customer comes on Saturday or what kind of place is it on the other side. This isn't one of grandpa's sayings, but a restaurant's job is to put out delicious food. A customer comes in, I give that customer his food. That customer thinks the food is delicious and happily pays. Just that is enough. Whether the customer comes from 'this side' or 'that side' doesn't matter.

Because of that, The Western Style Cathouse had one more name attached to it.

'The Other World Dining Hall.'

That's the one other name that 'those on the other side' call this place.

Translator Notes:

*The original name would be Youshoku Nekoya. Youshoku referring to the western style Japanese cooking. Nekoya means catshop, but that sounded weird and made it sound like they eat cats. Ya could also mean a house of some kind so I stuck with that instead.

**The Japanese braised pork belly is called Kakuni. It's basically pork belly that's been simmered in soy sauce and other ingredients for a long time until it's extremely tender.

CHAPTER 1

MINCED CUTLET

The job called adventurer. It was the result of the four heroes bringing about the end of the long, long war with the demon race that lasted many hundreds of years about seventy years ago.

Until then, the numbers of battlefields started to become greatly reduced (although there has never been a time when there weren't any), the soldiers who once had an overflowing amount of work frantically tried to find a new lifestyle. Some of the people who were skilled with a blade were sought out by nobles and became knights, some of the people continued to cross the battlefields as mercenaries, there were those that gave up fighting and became craftsmen and farmers, there those that decided to be merchants, and those that turned their blades towards the innocent and could only live as violent bandits.

Finally, among those soldiers, there who called themselves 'adventurers' and started a new way of life.

Adventurer. They were those that in return for payment would fight dangerous monsters and bandits, protect the merchant carriages that passed from town to village, solved the various incidents that happened in the middle of the city, and plunder the ancient ruins that dotted the east of the continent. These people in return for not being protected by anyone chose a free lifestyle tied by no one.

It had been seventy years since the existence of adventurers came into being. The lifestyle of these adventurers varied from the small handfuls who were full of glory and success, the few who had retired satisfied with their success, and the countless who gave birth to nameless corpses. Even now they continue to increase. And today, another one of those adventurers had headed out on a new destination.

Her name was Sarah. Her specialty was bringing back treasures from ruins and such, the type of adventurer called a treasure hunter.

Sarah carefully lowered herself off the rope and headed below.

(Surely it was supposed to be today... which is why I have to be even more careful than usual.)

As she thought that she passed through the tunnel that she passed by many times before. She already memorized the path from the entrance to her destination, and Sarah herself had already taken care of all the dangerous monsters in the way. But, because of that, she had to move carefully.

(It wouldn't be funny if I were to die with the treasure right in front of my eyes.)

In the past, her cousin who taught Sarah when she was young the ins and outs of being a treasure hunter once said this. "If you let your guard down at the very end, you'll run into a terrible situation."

...That cousin later found connecting room to the deepest room of an elven ruin, and the next day was wasn't heard from again. Knowing that even today they still haven't found the corpse, Sarah swore that she would uphold his teachings. And thanks to her carefulness, Sarah arrived at her destination without a single wound...

"...What is this?"

When she saw it, she looked dazed and raised her voice.

Five years ago, the legendary treasure hunter, William Gold spent his last years in an abandoned mining town.

The reason why he settled down in this town, which in the past mined out iron and slowly declined a few decades ago, was to take a single part of the countless treasures, which he had earned with his own hands during his lifetime, and hide it in the abandoned mine.

That's what the rumor was.

Of course, it was a sort of fairytale. William's family, the Gold family, even now, was a large Mercantile House rivaling a country thanks to William's leftover inheritance. At the very least, formally, there were no records of William hiding his assets. In spite of this, Sarah visited the abandoned mine. The reason was that Sarah, by some strange coincidence, had received William Gold's diary.

According to the dairy, after moving to the mining town, William spent seven days a week visiting the abandoned mine. What was written down was very brief, for example 'Today is Satur's Day. Going to the mine,' is what was usually written down, but for some reason, of the seven days of the week, 'Satur's Day' was always emphasized. When William could move, he would always without fail on 'Satur's Day' go to the abandoned mine. When his body broke down due to illness and his body couldn't move 'Today is Satur's Day. I resent this unmoving body' showed up time and time again in his diary. Furthermore, from the last 'Satur's Day' there were only a few several days left.

One time, on the 'eighth day' after the last time, he visited the abandoned mine but, at that time, all he left behind was the phrase 'A big fool's errand' and countless swears.

Sarah was a young but skilled treasure hunter. At the very least, she could brag that she's not a punk who claims to be an adventurer or thief that can't tell a genuine article from an imitation.

This is what Sarah's intuition was telling her. This diary was the real thing, and that she should visit the mine on the same day that William visited the mine, the same 'Satur's day' or else nothing would happen.

And so, Sarah, while keeping the idea of William's treasure in her head, entered the mine.

To do that she went behind a hidden passageway that William himself camouflaged which a novice had no way of finding, sometimes engaged in dangerous combat with monsters like a professional would, and mapped out a safe way to the final room like a pro would. Finally she proceeded to the abandoned mine's final room on a 'Satur's Day,' she saw it.

There was a door.

A sign hung from the door with the picture of a cat and a strange characters, characters that couldn't be found in the eastern continent or the four continents, a set of characters unknown to Sarah who could read the characters of different species like the elves and the dwarves. Yesterday, there was no shape or form of it, but a door made of black oak had suddenly appeared.

"This is a door... right?"

After inspecting it, she confirmed that there were no traps and that it wasn't locked. In other words, if she was going to enter, now would be a good time as any.

"...Anyway, nothing will happen unless I go in, I guess."

Sarah worried for a bit but then decided to enter. Today would be the day she would come face to face with William's inheritance, so she took care of all the preparations that she could.

Having even bought precious healing medicines that could heal even bones and internal damage with one gulp and readied top-of-the-line equipment, she challenged the door. Now, there was no going back.

"If I lose and end up a corpse, that just means this is as far as I could go... Let's go."

With that treasure hunter's determination, Sarah opened the door.

chirin chirin

On the inside of the door there was a contraption, and the sound of a bell resounded.

(An alarm!?)

At that sound, Sara reflexively drew out her favorite dagger and took a stance.

“Welcome... Miss, can you put that dangerous thing away?”

Inside, there was one middle-aged man who had a shocked face compared to Sarah and urged to put away her dagger.

“...What is this?”

Sarah said dazed for the second time today.

Some time later.

“Cathouse?”

“Well, yes. It’s a simple western style restaurant... a place to order food.”

With the dagger put away, the shop’s owner easily explained what this place was to her.

“A restaurant... inside of an abandoned mine!?”

The owner shrugged his shoulders at Sarah’s sudden inquiry.

“Abandoned mine?... Ah, could it be, Miss, that you came from the ‘Door’ that William used?”

“The door William used... Huh?”

At the owner’s words, Sarah looked back at the entrance that she came from... and looked at the door. There was a big cat with its right arm raised wearing a golden bell furnished on the black oaken door.

“...Is this some kind of magic item?”

Looking closely at it again, Sarah picked up a strong magical power packed into the bell, and she looked to the owner for his confirmation. The owner nodded at Sarah’s question and answered.

“Well, yes. Though I don’t really know that much about it. From what a regular customer’s grandfather said, this door bends and twists time and space, and apparently, it gives birth to various ‘doors’ in the Other World. It connects once a week, one time out of seven days.”

“...Other World? This place, is the Other World?”

As she said that, Sarah looked around the restaurant that was apparently in the middle of this so-called Other World.

In the past, the existences called gods and devils left this world and created the so called Hell or the Realm of the Dead, Heaven, the World of the Mirror and the Land of the Fairies... There are many place like the ‘Other World’ in the land Sarah came from. Sarah herself hadn’t experienced any of them, but other famous treasure hunters... for example William Gold once traveled to an other world and brought back a treasure of god, a wand made from a branch of the god of luck. There was even a rumor that one of the four heroes, a great sage, gave an extremely large reward to him for it. Even now, this remains a famous story among treasure hunter.

The existence of the Other World wasn’t actually something to be doubtful about. But the fact that this is one of those places wasn’t something that was easily swallowed.

“Nothing out of the ordinary... is something I can’t say.”

But with a shrewd treasure hunter’s eye, Sarah overturned her thoughts. Compared to what Sarah knew as ‘Restaurants,’ this place was way too different.

It seemed like this place was a single underground room made by clearing away the land, nothing strange. But, hanging from the ceiling was something different from fire, as if a ball of dazzling light magic was fired on that spot, unexpectedly giving off a fearsome brightness as if you were standing under the sun. The lined up tables and chairs were well maintained and glazed, giving off brilliant luster. According to Sarah’s knowledge, what was lined up on those tables were very expensive looking, finely shaped transparent glass bottles, ceramics, and a small pitcher.

The restaurant was obviously not a high-class one but the interior said otherwise. Also it seemed like there were no servant about. It seemed like there is only one man managing this store.

“No, this place is a very average restaurant. So what will you do? Would you like to eat? It’s going to get busy in a little bit, but it’s too early for lunch time so I have a bit of spare time.”

“...I guess. I’ll take your offer.”

Food that she was recommended to by a man she didn’t know. At first she thought it was a trap but decided against it. This place was a place that William was very attached to, and on top of that, a restaurant in the Other World. She had genuine curiosity to the cuisine that fascinated William to that extent.

“Great. Go ahead and take any seat.”

As the owner said that, he stepped into the back of the restaurant.

“Let’s see... Since it’s the Other World’s cuisine, what’s going to come out?... I hope it’s not something weird.”

Sara took a seat at a table and looked at the things on it. At the edge of the table, glass bottles were lined up, one with a red liquid inside of it, one with something that was probably salt, and also wooden sticks that have been tapered to have a pointed end. On the ceramics, there were notes stuck to them to explain what exactly what they were, but to Sarah, who couldn’t read the characters, they remained a mystery.

“Miss, can you read the language of the eastern continent?”

While she was looking inside some of the ceramics, which had black fluids or white grains, the owner came back and asked her this.

“Yes, of course.”

At those words, Sarah nodded. The language of the eastern continent was the language that was passed down in the eastern continent where Sarah was born. If she couldn’t

read or write it then having a job like being a treasure hunter where you used your head would be impossible.

“Great. Then here. This is the menu. Please, take your time.”

As he said that, the owner methodically put down the menu written in the eastern continent language and a transparent glass cup filled with water and ice.

“...Wait. I didn’t order any water.”

Sarah said in a foul mood when she saw it.

It’s true that her throat was parched, and it was true that she was thinking about ordering some water, but she didn’t want to allow the man to decide what she would be buying or else who knows what kind of monetary damage that she’ll end up taking.

Being careful when paying is what Sarah, who came from a merchant house, was taught.

During this season, a cup of water with ice can only be obtained with magic. Sarah’s common sense told her that she would have to pay one silver coin for it. Being forced to buy such a thing was something that she couldn’t accept. But the owner laughed at Sarah’s problem.

“Oh, that lemon water is on the house. It’s free so don’t worry about it. Seconds too, so don’t worry and take it easy.”

After saying that, the owner went back into the kitchen, and, from what Sarah could see, started to do prep work.

“...What is this place? This restaurant.”

It seemed like this really was the Other World. Sarah recognized that fact once again and lifted her cup.

“...Cold and delicious.”

It seemed like the water had a faint amount of fruit juices mixed into it, giving it a refreshing flavor as it spread out in her mouth. To Sarah, the taste revived her from the stuffy smell of the mine where she endlessly walked. Without knowing or noticing, the tension in her body had started to slacken. Since it appeared to be free, Sarah drank without reservations and opened the menu. There she saw the eastern continent language that she was accustomed to... and also a variety of dishes that she couldn't recognize.

"Hmm, I get grilled beef and beef stew soup, but I don't really understand the others."

Sarah looked at the dishes' name and the one sentence that described what kind of dish it was.

As far as she could see, just like the western continent across the ocean instead of wheat, rice was used in a lot of dishes. In addition, there were dishes with broken up pieces of bread that were used as a flour and then fried in oil. All of them defied Sarah's common sense. All of it was strange cuisine.

"Honesty, which one would be good... Ah."

While she was having troubles deciding, she noticed something on the menu. The daily special set meal. Apparently it changed each day. That day's recommended dish. Compared to the other meals, it was two coppers cheaper.

"...Hm."

When she saw that, Sarah decided to order it. If she couldn't tell which dishes were tasty or not, all of them might as well be the same. In that case, choosing the cheapest dish would be the right line of thought.

"...Miss, have you decided?"

"Yes, I'd like the daily special set meal."

The owner saw Sarah had decided and approached her, and Sarah told him her order.

"I see, the daily special. Please wait just a moment."

“Hey, wait.”

As he heard that, the owner quickly stopped heading to the kitchen. He then asked Sarah.

“Yes, what is it?”

“What is today’s special anyway?”

Since she didn’t hear the name, she decided to ask. At that, the owner thought for a bit...

“Let’s see, today is... right, that guy had a relationship with this one.”

As he realized this, he told her what was on today’s menu.

“Today’s daily special is minced cutlet. William’s favorite dish.”

In the past, it was the name of the dish that William was infatuated with. With that, the owner returned to the back of the restaurant and the sound of sizzling oil could be heard from the kitchen. As she heard that noise, Sarah put together the information she managed to collect.

(First, the reason why William Gold spent his last years living in that town was... there’s no mistaking it.)

One time out of seven days... what William probably meant when he said ‘Satur’s Day’ was when he could visit this suspicious dining hall. If you think about it, there’s no mistake that the reason the retired William lived by himself in the rundown mining town was this dining hall.

(If you think about it that way, this place’s cooking... wouldn’t it probably be tastier than what a high-class restaurant would serve a king?)

With the fortune that William made during his lifetime and the funds he made from his commerce, he built a large stately mansion. In other words, he lived like a king. Anyway, a man that could treat people like objects as if he were a king would go this far for a taste of the delicacies that this restaurant has.

Also according to Sarah's knowledge, William in his late years had one of the most prominent fortunes even compared to kings in all of the eastern continent. If he just wanted food, he could get as much as he wanted with the amount of gold he had. In spite of that, he settled down in a place where he could be in reach of this dining hall. Just how good was this place?

As she thought that, Sarah waited for the food. And then, in just a moment, that food appeared before Sarah.

"Thank you for waiting. Your minced cutlet set meal."

After finishing cooking, the man lined up several plates on the table.

(...I see, this certainly is the Other World's cuisine.)

As she looked at the dishes, she once again accepted that this was a restaurant in the Other World. To that extent, there dishes lined up that went past Sarah's common knowledge.

In front of her, on a noticeably larger plate than the others, was two large brown lumps about the size of an adult's fist still sizzling with the rising sound of oil. Right next to it was a fruit cut into the four pieces, white sauce entangled with nice warm vegetables and pasta into some kind of dressed salad*, and finally, thin, cut, leafy vegetables left raw to accompany the dish. A separate plate was filled with two pieces of bread and accompanying that was probably a lump of butter wrapped in golden paper. Finally, inside a serving bowl was soup filled to the brim with finely chopped smoked meat and minced oranie**.



GYURURURURU

Sarah's stomach which hadn't had anything since breakfast let out a rumble.

The owner saw Sarah's face turn red at that sound, and he made grin and laughed.

"The bread and soup are all-you-can-eat at your leisure, so if you ever want more, please tell me. Minced cutlet tastes better if you pour the sauce in that blue bottle and lemon juice over it by the way."

As he said that, he pointed to one of the ceramics, a pitcher with a blue lid.

"Well, enjoy."

Saying just that, the owner drew back into the kitchen.

All that was left in the dining hall was Sarah and the minced cutlet set with a delicious smell wafting off of it.

"...What is this!? It's delicious!?"

First, for some reason or another, Sarah tried the accompanying soup which seemed familiar, and as the soup entered in her mouth, she unintentionally let out her voice due to the unexpected flavor.

The sweet taste of the oranie and the flavor of the smoked dried meat... that much was acceptable.

But something else what was in the soup, something that could not be seen. The countless flavors of various vegetables and meat was held inside of it.

Countless flavors that while entangling were never disordered, a clear flavor.

Without thinking, she drank all of the soup in one breath.

With just the soup, the dining halls back home couldn't compare to this flavor.

"Uwaa... this is very soft."

Next was the bread.

To Sarah's common sense, this bread so soft that it was unthinkable.

On top of that, as if it were natural, they were serving white bread.

Soft and fluffy, softness greater than compared to the white bread she ate her family's estate.

And just by smearing the mysterious golden wrapped butter on it, its flavor was twenty times better.

The melting butter's saltiness and deliciousness pulled up the soft, sweet wheat flavor of the high-quality white bread.

This too disappeared in the blink of an eye.

"Hey! Can I get another serving of soup and bread!?"

"Coming right up."

As the owner said that, Sarah finally started on the main dish. A brown mysterious lump. Finally, knife and fork headed to the minced cutlet.

Even though looking at it you wouldn't think that it looked tasty, but with a gulp, she swallowed her saliva. To Sarah it was a dish she knew nothing about, but just the soup and bread was delicious enough to be a dining hall's main dish. There was no way it would taste bad.

Doubtfulness had in time became expectation. Sarah carefully cut out one mouthful of minced cutlet. With a crisp sound, the knife broke in, and from the perfectly fire-cooked, grey cut end, the juices from the meat gushed and flowed out. Looking at the cross-section, it seemed like finely minced meat was the main ingredient.

While wondering what kind of flavor it would have, she brought it to her mouth.

"...Uwa."

That was all she could say. That's how delicious it was.

Spreading from the center of her mouth was ample amounts of meaty juice. Then came the feeling of the light outer layer cooked with the high-quality oil mixing and merging in the middle of her mouth and then coming apart. The salt and pepper began to kick in, but it didn't hit harshly, the perfect seasoning for the meat along with the sweetness of the oranie packed into the meat.

They invited Sarah into the wonderful world of flavor.

"...Didn't he say it would taste better if I covered in something called lemon and sauce?"

After one of the round patties disappeared into her stomach leaving half of the minced cutlet left, she remember what the owner said. After regrettably having only one of the minced cutlet left, Sarah carefully cut it in half and picked up the blue pitcher.

Gently, she turned it towards the minced cutlet and tilted it, letting out deep brown sauce flow out of the pitcher, covering the minced cutlet. Like a bright tea kimono bound by a black obi, the deep brown sauce was offset by the brilliant yellow fruit... the lemon's squeezed juices covered the cutlet. The cutlet sucked up the sauce and became slightly soft. Once again, Sarah brought the minced cutlet to her mouth...

After that was silence. If she had time to say unnecessary words then she could use that time to savor it even more.

A sauce with a complicated flavor to it and the refreshing sourness of the lemon. Together with the minced cutlet made the minced cutlet from before that was already thought to be a taste of the heavens instead became 'lacking something.' And Sarah sensed this.

Plenty of meaty juice and fat, the sweet oranie. The element that was missing from this dish was sourness. The condiment called sauce and the sweetness from the lemon was as if it could only be granted by a fruit that had nothing but sourness led to the completion of the minced cutlet.

The deep satisfaction of the meat and the rich outer layer. If you have one or two bites and continue eating, your stomach will start to feel full and your hands will stop.

Sourness can neutralize this feeling and leave you feeling satisfied while giving you a nice aftertaste.

With that, you can continue eating no matter what. If it can inspire about such a belief then it must surely be a dish of the gods dwelling in the heavens.

After that, Sarah had seconds of the minced cutlet. Occasionally she would get more bread and soup to cleanse her palate. In the middle of her meal, the owner taught her a new way of eating it which involved sandwiching the green leafy vegetable (which was apparently called cabbage in the other world) and the minced cutlet covered in plenty of sauce between two slices of bread.

The minced cutlet sandwiched by the bread had a nice clean texture and a deep flavor with the soft bread and the crunchy cabbage complementing each other. Just eating it with bread gave it the effect of turning it into one completely different dish.

Eating until her stomach reached the limit, Sarah ordered and savored more of the minced cutlet until she couldn't anymore. Then she finally put down her knife and fork.

"Fuu... that was delicious."

Cheerfully, she put down one silver coin and several copper coins for the payment.

"Thank you very much... Also Miss, could you do me a favor?"

After seeing that the payment was exactly the right amount, the owner passed something along to Sarah.

"What this?"

"A bento."

Bento. With that word, the owner remembered the time that his previous regular customer was still alive, and with a slightly lonely laugh, he told her what was inside.

"Minced cutlet sandwich. William, whenever he would come here, he would always order the minced cutlet set meal and this. You looked like you enjoyed eating it so

much that I made with it without thinking. Don't worry about the money, it's on the house today, so please, take it. It's okay if it gets cold, but it doesn't have that much of a shelf life so it's better if you eat it as soon as you can."

"...Is it really alright?"

Sarah was surprised at the owner's sudden request and asked that. Right now her stomach was filled to the brim so eating it right now was impossible, but once her stomach became empty again, the flavor would make her want it again. She just found out that the combination of bread and minced cutlet was without compare. The taste would make her immediately bite into it the moment her stomach would start to lighten.

"Yes, of course. Just think of it as William's treat."

"I see. Then I'll accept it without reservations."

Nodding the owner's consideration, she took the paper bag from him. Wafting from the paper bag, the warm smell of sauce drifted in the air, giving her full stomach a bit of appetite.

"Well then, until next time."

"Yes, please. I'll be waiting for your return."

With that, Sarah headed to the exit.

The sound of the bell sounded out as the door opened, and in front of her, the familiar view of the abandoned mine stretched out.

"Ah, that's right..."

From behind her, she heard the owner's voice.

"About William, what happened to him?"

"He passed away. The fact that he couldn't come here was too vexing for him."

At those words, the door finally closed. At the same time, the door vanished. All that was left was the abandoned mine's silence.

"The legendary treasure hunter's last treasure..."

Looking at the space that the black door used to be which now had nothing, Sarah licked her lips while thinking of her experience.

"...I see, a treasure befitting William Gold."

The William, who when he was young was in poverty... Her grandfather who had no acquaintances and was known to be a glutton. She remembered such stories.

The young, rising treasure hunter and the daughter of the up-and-coming company, the Gold Company. Sarah Gold, while looking forward to the next Saturday, hurried back on her way.

Translator's notes:

*The dressed salad is an aemono, a type of Japanese salad that uses vegetable like okra or green peas or others and then covered in a dressing.

**Oranie is what those from the other side call onions

CHAPTER 2

TERIYAKI

Feeling the biting cold going even through his thick overcoat, he opened the floating, black oak door.

(It seems like it's winter over there too.)

Breathing in the warm air coming from it, Tatsugorou once again felt the coming of winter as he spat a white breath. Tatsugorou was quite partial to this restaurant, where pleasantly cool air leaked out of the door during summer and warm air leaked out during the winter. The Other World's apparently called 'Air Conditioning' was an unusual but amazing feature. Summers were cool. Winters were warm. The Other World Dining Hall was something that inn and pubs couldn't compare to. Even castles owned by royalty couldn't compare to how comfortable this place was.

"Owner, I'll be in your care."

Tatsugorou, feeling ashamed of being an adult while still living at home, left his hometown located in the faraway western continent armed with a famous sword from his family's house. Relying on nothing but his fencing skill that he honed in his hometown, Tatsugorou continued to cut down monsters and criminals alike for thirty years and in his home language that was starting to fade away, he said that one line as he pass through the door like he always did.

"Welcome."

Tatsugorou greeted him and looked at the young man who became a middle-aged man that inherited the shop from the old man. At the man's voice, Tatsugorou thought back to the days when he first starting coming to the restaurant, to the days with the previous owner who was older than he was.

"...I see. I grew old, haven't I?"

With that, he let out a bitter laugh.

Thinking about it, it had been around ten years since the new owner took over the restaurant.

At that time, the new owner had a face that you could say had no trace of youth, and now that same face was full of dignity. A bold face. Over the past ten years, the various dishes that the previous owner would bring out no longer showed themselves. Instead, dishes that never showed up during the previous owner's time were written down in the current menu. The people that used to show their faces in the restaurant one by one started to disappear as well. Instead, even now, faces never seen before would take their seats.

"Sorry, Miss. I'll need to pass by you."

It was a new face that seemed somewhat familiar to him. He passed by a girl who seemed like an adventurer, who was smiling while she poured sauce over her minced cutlet and cabbage, and headed to his usual seat. At the very back of the restaurant, the seat closest to the kitchen. Setting down his trusty partner, his samurai sword, he flumped his rump into the seat. Sitting down in his usual seat, Tatsugorou let out a heartfelt breath.

"...It's been about one month, 'Teriyaki.'"

A customer sat down at his table as if it was the natural thing to do. This customer called out to Tatsugorou, a veteran of this restaurant. It was a skinny old man dressed in an old, musty robe. Even though the old man looked like he was withered to the point that he might break down at any second, stacked on the table in front of him were nicely chilled mugs of golden beer, the sound of fizz popping out them. It was one of this old man's favorite things here.

"Aah, I was busy with work for a bit. You look the same as ever though, 'Roast Cutlet.'"

Tatsugorou said back to this regular with who he had the longest association with in this restaurant. Inside of the restaurant, if you ever wanted to call someone, you had to call them by their favorite dish. He forgot when this tradition started, but by now, he had become accustomed to it.

“Hahhahhah! That’s because the day I stop eating cutlet and drinking beer would be the day I die!”

The old man then playfully bit into and chewed up his roast cutlet which was covered in plenty of mustard and sauce. He then washed it down with beer and let out a single burp. It was a spectacle that was extremely vulgar but at the same time showed how delicious the food was

(Seriously, I’m amazed that this person is supposed to be a sage filled with countless knowledge.)

At that thought, Tatsugorou internally let out a bitter laugh. Tatsugorou knew that the ‘Roast Cutlet’ in front of him one of the four heroes that brought victory to humans during the ‘Evil God War.’ He was a master of magic and a knowledgeable, legendary sage. His name was famous enough that even a kid living in a village in the middle of the woods would know it.

Roast Cutlet probably knew of Tatsugorou’s name due to the fact that in the past thirty years, he was known as a foreign master fencer who cut down countless monsters and saved countless people, villages, and towns. But, that doesn’t matter. Right now, in this place, they were just people who loved roast cutlet and teriyaki. A pair of drinking buddies.

“Have you decided on your order, sir?”

“Aah, just like always. Teriyaki chicken. Bring out the rice first. Along with pickles* too. And also... cold refined sake**.”

When the owner came by, Tatsugorou went and ordered things at his own discretion until he had the same order that he always had.

“Understood, the usual it is.”

The owner went along with his pace and quickly headed to the back before coming out with what he requested.

“Here you go. Your rice and pickles. And in today’s miso soup is tofu and seaweed.”

The owner placed those things and left. Pickles and a rice bowl filled with pure white rice. And finally miso soup. The reason why Tatsugorou loved this restaurant was lined up right in front of him. At the sight of them, he smiled broadly, and while breathing the warm steam, he bowed his head.

While in high spirits, he picked up the chopsticks, picked up the rice bowl, and while still plain, took one mouthful. The rice... the sweet grains' aroma was gentle and spread out in his mouth. There was a clear difference between the dry and crumbling brown rice of his home town and the white steaming rice that Tatsugorou chewed thoroughly.

Every time you chewed it, the sweetness of the rice increased and spread throughout the mouth. Once he was satisfied with that sweetness, Tatsugorou swallowed the rice and bit into the pickles to change his palate.

With a loud crunch, the memories of winter and merchants in the shopping district with their humbly made yellow pickles*** came up. A strong saltiness took away the sweetness in his mouth.

Then, while his mouth was overflowing with saltiness, he took one more mouthful of rice. And while barely chewing, he poured the soup full of miso into his mouth. The white, soft tofu, the green ocean grass known as seaweed which couldn't be found at his hometown which was surrounded by mountains, and the rice fell down to his stomach together with the hot soup.

“...Fuu.”

He then involuntarily let out a breath of satisfaction.

Unlike the bread that was made from ground-up wheat and was spread throughout the eastern continent, Tatsugorou felt that the rice grown in paddies had the mysterious flavor of his hometown where they ate it every day. The soft, sweet, white bread that can only be tasted in this restaurant was something he didn't hate, but, as he thought, the reason why he felt rice was better was because it could make him remember his hometown which he left long ago and never returned to.

(This restaurant's food might be too good though. I don't think I could go back to my hometown when they don't have soy sauce and miso.)

He continued to savor his rice as he came up with such pointless thoughts. White rice, miso soup, and pickles. It was Tatsugorou's style to enjoy them as the opening act before the leading actor came.

"Thank you for waiting. Your teriyaki chicken and sake."

And while he was enjoying the opening act, today's leading actor finally showed itself. A large mass of chicken meat, covered in salty-sweet sauce and then grilled, teriyaki chicken. This taste that he knew for over twenty years is what made Tatsugorou fall in love with this restaurant.

(Umu, so it's come.)

After being satisfied with rice and soup, he was perfectly ready to eat his fill of teriyaki. He picked up one piece of meat that was cut thinly as if to make it easier to eat with chopsticks. Heavy amounts of light-brown transparent sauce coated the chicken's brown skin. The meat was so white, as if it was a maiden that knew no disgrace. The contrast was lovely.

First was to enjoy with the eyes... then bring it to the mouth. The skin was sticky with just the right amount of fat and the feeling of the soft meat spread in his mouth. With each bite, the fat from the skin along with the salty-sweet mix of soy sauce and sugar which covered the meat flowed out from the young chicken's juicy meat.

(Aah, not good.)

Tatsugorou hurriedly shoveled rice into his mouth. Tatsugorou tossed the rice into his mouth knowing that the simple but slightly deep flavor of the teriyaki together with the rice became the perfect taste.

(...Umu.)

The sweet meaty juices of the teriyaki were absorbed by the rice. The aromatic steamy rice was suppressed by the meat which in turned it into a first-rate delicious sensation

that made him bow his head. The salty-sweet flavoring of the fatty, soft teriyaki and the soft and warm sweetness of the white rice. Tatsugorou thought this combination was the most enjoyable way to eat rice.

While remembering the times in the past when he had fierce discussions with the other regulars about whether 'curry rice' or 'omelette rice' or 'cutlet bowl' was best which then turned into quite the serious brawls, Tatsugorou naturally started to smile as he stuffed his mouth with rice.

What was the most delicious thing in this restaurant? It was the most discussed topic amongst all the regulars, and because of the restaurant's vast selection, a consensus still hasn't been made.

And finally, the Other World's liquor. On to the sake. Snack on teriyaki and drink alcohol. First, he filled the cup halfway full and then downed it. He then enjoyed the strength of the alcohol that burned his throat and the fragrance of fruit that filled his nose that came with it. From then on, he began to drink little by little to keep himself from getting drunk and to enjoy the flavor.

The first drink was pure. After that, he snaked on teriyaki in between. That was the way that Tatsugorou liked to enjoy his sake. He filled his glass cup with alcohol that was clear as water and smelled of sweet fruit. The sake was also as strong as the spirits that dwarves enjoyed. The strong, dry flavor of the sake that burned the tongue matched well with the sweet flavor of the teriyaki.

That liquor was also something unique to the Other World. In this Other World restaurant, there were familiar drinks such as beer and wine, but there were also drinks that could only be found in the Other World and all of them were delicious.

According to a rumor, every time this store's Satur's Day came, craftsman dwarves would come here to 'drink' in order to find some way to make the Other World's liquor for the past number of years. Recently, they managed to find some links and made some alcohol that was said to be too delicious for this world and worthy of fame, but it wasn't able to satisfy the people who knew the deliciousness of the Other World's alcohol. In other words, unfortunately, it meant that in Tatsugorou's lifetime, the only place where he could drink sake would be in the Other World Dining Hall.

“Muu... Teriyaki chicken looks good too.”

Seeing how much Tatsugorou enjoyed it, Roast Cutlet muttered that and sighed.

“If you want, I’ll trade you for the middle part of your roast cutlet.”

For the sake of their friendship, he set up a proposal. Teriyaki was the ultimate combination with rice, but Tatsugorou knew that roast cutlet covered in plenty of sauce went well with rice too.

“...Can’t it be an end piece?”

“No way. If you don’t like my offer, order some yourself.”

This was a point he wouldn’t budge on.

From then on, he enjoyed his meal while having some loose conversation.

Drinking alcohol, enjoying the middle piece of roast cutlet that he traded some teriyaki for, and having a chat. Time passed as he enjoyed himself...

“Well... if I don’t head back now, my disciples will get fussy.”

Roast Cutlet, who had many disciples like a legendary sage would, stood up from his seat, and Tatsugorou did so as well.

“Hey, Owner. I’ll leave the payment here.”

Tatsugorou took out several silver coins out of the coin purse tucked away in his breast pocket and laid them on the table. Every time, the amount increased a little. When he was young and didn’t have any money, the previous owner took care of the bill and lost out on money, so in a way, this was a form of repayment.

“Understood. Thank you very much each time.”

The owner was used to this so he obediently took the money and began to clean the table.

“I was in your care. I’ll come again.”

To the owner, Tatsugorou gave a single bow and walked to the exit with Roast Cutlet.

“...Fumu. So that’s ‘Minced Cutlet the Second’ huh?”

On the way there, Roast Cutlet muttered that. In his gaze was a single female adventurer... the new face that Tatsugorou saw earlier.

After finishing her meal, she started to relax while drinking some Other World tea called coffee.

“...What do you mean by that?”

At Roast Cutlet’s sudden remark, Tatsugorou tilted his head.

“I mean what I mean. Just look.”

While laughing, Roast Cutlet left the restaurant.

“I wonder what he means... that old man.”

As he thought that, he took one step outside the restaurant and found himself in the middle of the mountains, illuminated only by the moon. The exit to the restaurant was the same place where you entered. Traveling in the dark was dangerous so he carefully and slowly headed to a nearby shelter to sleep.

“...Aah, that’s right. The second, huh?”

Feeling slightly tipsy as he walked, he suddenly understood what Roast Cutlet meant.

“Now that I think about it, how many years has it been since I last seen him... that Minced Cutlet guy.”

From the rumors that he had heard, he had died of sickness. The man who loved minced cutlet more than anyone in that restaurant and would often fight with Croquette and Roast Cutlet over which dish was the tastiest.

And the girl that Roast Cutlet, who was a quarrel-friend, called Minced Cutlet the Second didn't resemble Minced Cutlet at all but did resemble Minced Cutlet in the fact that she loved minced cutlet enough to get a nickname for it.

"I see now... the world keeps on turning, huh?"

Most likely, that girl is a blood relative of Minced Cutlet.

Their age seems to be quite the ways apart though but for a great-grandchild that was about right.

—-Maybe in time, I guess I should bring that promising guy to the Other World Dining Hall.

He suddenly had that thought. At this rate, it would be a waste if he died while being completely forgotten. Tatsugorou felt that.

Translator's notes:

*Pickles refers to tsukemono, which can be pickled vegetables of all sorts from cabbage to onions.

**Cold Refined Sake was translated from Seishu no Hiya. Seishu referring to the type of sake and hiya referring to the temperature that it should be served.

***These pickles refer to Nukazuke which is pickle made by fermenting vegetables in rice bran and is usually made from daikon, cabbage, or cucumbers.

CHAPTER 3

FRIED SHRIMP

The sunset darkened the sky and left only the stars and the moon's light for Heinrich, who was running straight through the wilderness, to depend upon as his stamina started to reach its limits. At this rate he would use up all his strength and collapse, unable to fulfill his duty, and he would end up in the awkward situation where he would die alone in the wilderness. Shaking off that premonition, Heinrich continued to shoot through the wilderness bringing with him the knowledge he gained during his service.

Right now, the only reason his feet were still moving because of willpower and that he had the feeling that he couldn't collapse here now. Heinrich was entrusted with a very important duty that he had to fulfill no matter how impossible it was. In the forest where monsters lived, there was news of a large outbreak of mothmen. Heinrich couldn't die because he had to bring this news to the royal castle.

Yesterday, the dukedom received a report that mothmen, a humanoid type monster with four arms and moth-like wings, were seen flying from the various monster-infested forests dotting the area. Of course, Heinrich and the other who were stationed in the nearby fortress, which was made to observe whether any monsters would leak from forest, engaged the mothmen, but the mothmen dispersed poisonous powder, danced in the sky, assaulted with their claws, and most importantly, fought back with their abnormal numbers. Heinrich and his duchy's knights were desperately opposing the siege but at this rate, loss was a foregone conclusion.

They needed to get back as quick as possible to the duchy to inform them of their distress and send back reinforcement. The one who was selected to fulfill this important duty was Heinrich, the one who excelled at taking care of the horses.

Yesterday, to return to the duchy and notify them, Heinrich put the secret message that was signed with the division commander's signature into his breast pocket and exited the fortress with the small opening his comrades made for him. According to the plan,

he should have already made it. But right now, Heinrich was running through the wilderness connected to the duchy on foot.

What Heinrich miscalculated was his horse. His intention was to choose a healthy, powerful horse, but when he exited the fortress, a mothman seemed to have hit it with its poison. Halfway there, the horse he was riding on started to foam bubbles out of its mouth and then it collapsed.

With no other way, leaving his horse, Heinrich and carried the minimal amount of luggage, and with his two legs, he then intended to head to the castle town. But that reached its limit as well. He started to lose feeling in his overworked legs, and his body started to become dehydrated with all the sweat pouring out of him.

And most importantly... he was started to get hungry. When he left the fortress, Heinrich took a sufficient amount of food. But, after a full day, his stomach was already empty. In order to make the horse run even a little bit faster, he made the mistake of dropping his provisions.

(I can't die... in a place like this!)

If Heinrich was to die here, it meant that his comrades still fighting in the fortress, who believed that Heinrich would deliver the message, would no doubt die as well. Not only that but the populace of the towns and villages behind the fortress's defense line would die as well. To go against such an outcome, Heinrich, the young knight from the tall and prideful House of Zeelemann, forced himself to run. If he continued to run at this rate, by dawn he should make it there.

The problem that the fatigued and exhausted Heinrich's physical strength was being used up even faster.

(Great god of the ocean and water! Please give unto me strength!)

Trying not to waste any more energy, inside of his heart, he prayed to the god of water whose religion was the most widespread in his portside hometown... and god didn't abandon the poor Heinrich.

"...!"

A small hut reflected in Heinrich's eyes. The small hut which even now it seemed like it might rot away was probably a settler's hut.

"I'm saved...!"

If he could get some food and water from here... Thinking along those lines, Heinrich made up his mind. Heinrich was carrying an important duty that could control the fate of his duchy. He had to prioritize its success over 'everything else.' Heinrich gripped the sword that was strapped to his side. The sword that he brought with him when he left the fortress. The famous dwarven sword that was handed down through his Zeeleman house... Everything was for the duchy. Filling himself with deep, dark determination, Heinrich opened the well-made, black door.

As the door opened, the sound of a bell ringing sounded out, and Heinrich's eyes that were accustomed to the light of the moon and stars were dazzled in that instant. The inside of the settler's hut was unexpectedly glaringly bright.

"Welcome."

The middle-aged man who said that to Heinrich was most likely the owner of this hut.

(...He's alone.)

There seemed to be no other presence besides that man. Feeling gratitude at his luck, Heinrich began to spout coercive words.

"I am Heinrich Zeeleman, a knight serving the duchy! Owner of this hut and citizen of the duchy! Bring forth water and provisions! If not..."

"Coming right up."

As he was about to continue his frantic, menacing demands, his resolution to fight to the death began to waver since his demands were met so easily.

"Go ahead and take a seat wherever you want. I'll bring you a towel and some water."

Heinrich looked closer at the man who said this to him. For someone who was living in these wilderness, his clothes were neat and tidy.

“Un, understood...”

In front of this relaxed man, Heinrich let go of his maliciousness and took a seat.

“Oh right, Sir. Can you read the eastern continental language?”

“Ye, yes. I can read it.”

At that question, Heinrich looked confused before nodding his head.

“I see. That’s good. Please wait just a moment.”

As he said that, the man went to the back of the room... probably to take a water jug placed in the cooking area.

(What is this place? This hut...)

While waiting for the man, Heinrich took a look around the place again, and his bewilderment deepened. There were many high-quality polished tables and chairs with soft cushions. All inside of the room which was strangely bright even though it was night. Lined up on top of the table were various small glass bottles and ceramics. Things that shouldn’t be there in a settler’s hut where they should be living on the bare minimum.

“Hey. What the hell are you? You’re not an ordinary settler, are you?”

Heinrich asked the man who was carrying a tray filled with a skillfully wound cloth, a metal water pitcher, and a glass cup filled with ice and water. This place was too incomprehensible to him. Heinrich’s voice unknowingly become stiff as well.

“Settler? What’s that? This is a restaurant called ‘The Western Style Cathouse.’”

The man mysteriously said that back to Heinrich.

“A restaurant? In a place like this!?”

He couldn’t think of it as anything but a joke.

There was no way any customers would come to this restaurant when Heinrich himself only passed by this place today due to a miracle. As he thought that, Heinrich had raised his voice.

“Although I don’t know what ‘Door’ you came from, sir, but this door has a special property to it. The doorbell has some magic casted over it, and there are similar doors that connect to this one on the other side... so it seems.”

The man was used to this so he explained to Heinrich about “The Other World Dining Hall.” Even though he knew that he wouldn’t be believed at first.

“What kind of stupid...”

Listening to these unbelievable words, Heinrich’s bewilderment grew even larger. Seeing Heinrich like this, the man sighed once and said this.

“Well, I guess it’s no wonder why you don’t believe me. If you told me this, I would think it’s a lie too. Anyway, this is without a doubt a restaurant. Just in case, I can bring out anything written on this menu, so go ahead and order something.”

As he said that, the so-called restaurant’s owner set down the book called a menu.

“A menu...? What are you saying...?”

As he complained, Heinrich opened the menu in front of the owner. The book had a strange smooth feeling to it unlike leather or paper. And also, there were dishes that he never seen or heard of listed inside of it.

“Fumu. Very good penmanship...”

Heinrich guessed that the person who wrote this menu must have had an extremely good education. The letters were written to be easily read and the vocabulary was abundant. Most importantly, it accurately described the dishes that Heinrich never heard or seen of.

“Well, anything is fine. I should fill my stomach first and then...!?”

Heinrich’s eyes became glued to one of the items on the menu.

—-Made with schripe* caught from the southern seas which is then battered and fried in oil

When he saw that sentence, Heinrich forgot about the current situation and swallowed some saliva at the word schripe. Schripe was a creature that was often caught back at his portside hometown. It had a thin long body protected by a hard shell and filled with soft meat, and its special characteristic would be its big claws. At first, when it's caught it looks blue but when cooked it turns red. You can cover it in salt and grill or you could chop it up and use it as an ingredient for a soup. However, it spoils extremely easily. It's difficult to transport them to any nearby towns, so you can only eat them in portside towns like the one Heinrich came from. Ever since he became a knight, it's been years since he was separated from his hometown or even had a bite of schripe.

(Aah, this isn't good.)

The moment he began to reminisce about schripe, Heinrich's tongue began to revive the long lost flavor of schripe in his mouth. It was meaty but had a different sensation than when eating game that dwelled on land. Every time you chewed it, salty meaty juices would burst out. He remembered when he was a child, and he clutch the few copper coins he got from his wet nurse to go buy grilled salted schripe like the rest of the commoner children.

"Sir, have you decided your order?"

"A, aah. This. Give me this thing called fried shrimp."

At the owner's prodding, he pointed his finger at the schripe dish. For a moment, he remembered that there shouldn't be any decent food let alone schripe in the middle of this suspicious wilderness, but the owner of this restaurant said he could 'bring out' anything. If he couldn't, then he would be a fraud.

"Got it, fried shrimp it is. Are you okay with bread as a side?"

“A, aah.”

The owner confirmed Heinrich’s request as if it were nothing, and with a nod, he headed to the back of the restaurant.

“...Is it really going to come out? Schripe.”

Feeling suspicious of the owner’s carefree behavior, Heinrich took a drink of water.

“Delicious...”

He involuntarily let out a sigh. It was nicely chilled water with ice inside of it. The sweet, faint flavor of fruit made his body feel refreshed, and it began to soak into his body that was parched from running nonstop.

(Why is something like ice here as if it were something ordinary?)

Ever since he came to this restaurant, countless questions passed by his head, but his hand didn’t stop. He took the polish water pitcher made of metal and poured water into his glass cup and then drank. Wetting his dry throat and happy that he could cool down his exhausted, burning body, he repeated the action three more times. He took his leather bag that was long since empty and filled it to the brim with water. Heinrich then took a breather.

“Muu. This is quite comfortable.”

He then wiped away his sweat with the cloth that was brought out. The cloth was knitted in a way he hadn’t seen before and was about the size of a hand towel. Perhaps it was doused in hot water and then wrung. When he took the warm thing and wiped himself, it felt very refreshing.

First he wiped his hands, then he wiped his head and the back of his neck. Around the time the three cloths that the owner brought out were completely pitch black, the filth and sweat on Heinrich’s arms and head were completely gone.

“Here it is. Thank you for waiting. Your fried shrimp. Please enjoy it with our specially made tartar sauce.”

Once Heinrich's preparations were all taken care of, the owner brought out the food and then left it in front of Heinrich.

Thinly chopped vegetables and small red fruits were served on white plate. In a small white bowl, something green was mixed together with a white something. And finally, stacked on top of a plate was deep-fried schripe... the dish called 'fried shrimp.'

"Well then, enjoy. You're free to have seconds of the soup and bread so tell me when you want more."

"Umu."

Ignoring the owner's words, Heinrich instinctively gulped down his saliva.

(This is schripe, you say?)

This was a dish that looked extremely different from the schripe he knew. First, the shape was straight. Normally, whether you grilled it or boiled it, when schripe was cooked, it usually curved into itself like a ball.

If you skewered it and then grilled it, you could give it a straight shape, but this so-called 'fried shrimp' had no signs of being skewered. In spite of that, three pieces of fried shrimp were stretched straight out on top of the plate, a savory smell coming from them. Heinrich, who was an amateur when it came to cooking, couldn't understand how exactly this came to be.

(The explanation said that it was battered and fried but...)

Indeed, the fried shrimp's tail... was something that schripe had so there was no room for doubt. Everything else besides the red tail was covered by a bright brown coating. At first he thought it was a certain savage empire's style of dissolving wheat flour into water to make a coating, but the surface had a rough feeling to it. Coming from a lineage of knights from his hometown and as a noble representing his town, to Heinrich, who had tasted a very diverse amount of dishes from foreign countries, it was a dish he never seen before.

(Ah well. First I should have a bite and see how it is.)

He took his knife and cut down with the sharp end, and then stabbed with his fork and lifted it up. It seemed like the head was taken off and the shell was peeled during preparation. From the cross-section, underneath the coating, it's white, soft body peaked out.

(Umu. Going by looks, it seems pretty delicious.)

The exterior's bright brown color and the color of the fresh interior gave a contrast that brought up Heinrich's appetite. Thinking of that, Heinrich brought the fried shrimp into his mouth and bit into it.

"...Ooh."

The moment he swallowed it, that word involuntarily leaked out. That was, without a doubt, schripe. The schripe was fresher than the ones he ate back in his hometown, and juices leaked out from the meaty, white flesh. The light, simple taste of the schripe met with the savory texture of the batter which made from high-quality flour and cooked in oil had no presence, and the two became pure bliss.

The batter crumbled inside of his mouth as he sunk his teeth into the schripe, the texture of its body pushing back, giving it a firm texture. It didn't have the rotted smell of old schripe, but instead was filled with a deliciousness befitting the creatures that dwelled in the ocean. As he continued to bite into it, fresh, meaty juices would flow out of it, and together with the light batter, they flew down into his stomach.

Heinrich, who became enamored with the texture and taste of the light batter and the fresh schripe, ate one piece of the fried shrimp in the blink of an eye.

"Umu... mu?"

He even chewed down on the tail which had a savory flavor to it until it broke down into pieces. As he was about to dig into the second piece of fried shrimp, Heinrich suddenly remembered the owner's words.

(Didn't he say to eat it with something called tartar sauce?)

He looked at the plate. Or more precisely, he looked at the small bowl placed on top of the plate. Inside of it was emerald green things mixed into a white something. There was no mistaking that this was what the owner called ‘tartar sauce.’ But if you put it on the already delicious fried shrimp, would it really be tasty?

Heinrich, in half-doubt, cut off the end of the fried shrimp and covered it in the white sauce. The white schripe’s body was slightly covered in a white sauce with a little bit of green.

(It looks tasty but...)

The problem was the taste. Still in doubt, Heinrich brought it to his mouth— and was speechless.

(What the, what is this!?)

It was a flavor that Heinrich didn’t know about. It was an unknown sauce that had a straightforward mild taste but with a little bit of sourness to it. He felt Inside of that white sauce was a mixture of pickled vegetables, boiled eggs and small amounts of strong-tasting herbs, and together with the simple-tasting fried shrimp, they became a wonderful flavor.

The deliciousness of the schripe wrapped up in batter was pulled up by the sourness of the tartar sauce, and at the same time, the flavor the egg and the scent of the small amounts of herbs was added on to the schripe, which in turn changed into a complicated flavor.

(I don’t even know what to say...)

Heinrich then began to feel regret over the fried shrimp he ate just a while ago. It was tasty as it was, but it couldn’t compete with the combination with tartar sauce.

As he thought that, his stomach began to make a disgraceful sound. It was a terrible experience. His stomach was supposed to be a bit fuller as he ate, but he actually started to get hungrier.

“Apologies, Owner! One more serving please!”

Without thinking, Heinrich added another order.

“You got it! Sir, you sure seem to have taken quite the liking to fried shrimp.”

Seeing how happy Heinrich was, the owner let out a cheerful laugh and his middle-age intuition told him that one more serving wasn't going to be enough, so he began to fry up even more shrimp.

After that, Heinrich swallowed down three plates of fried shrimp covered in plenty of tartar sauce. The freshly fried shrimp and the sourness of the tartar sauce made an outstanding combination. The high-quality side dishes were soft, white bread and soup which perfectly balanced the deliciousness of meat and the flavor of vegetables and filled to the brim with oranie. All of these disappeared into his stomach. Sometimes to cleanse his palate, he would take the thinly-sliced, fresh vegetables that was served with the fried shrimp by hand and enjoy the sensation as he bit into them. These vegetables did not have the bitter taste or bad smell that other leafy vegetables had, but instead they had a sweetness that surprisingly went well with the tartar sauce. Just by covering it in tartar sauce, he had the illusion that he could eat it without end.

Bread, soup, leafy vegetables, and finally fried shrimp and tartar sauce. Not of single one of them were bad, and in fact, they made a splendid combination. While he was eating, Heinrich forgot all about the duchy's crisis and was bound by these dishes.

“Oh god who rules over the ocean and water, I thank for you letting me enjoyed such a wonderful meal.”

After he was finished praying, Heinrich's meal was over. Wanting to know about how the dish was prepare, Heinrich got up from his seat... and his face turned blue.

(...Curses! I don't have any money!?)

That's was right. Right now he was in the middle of his job as a messenger, and he left his wallet back at the fortress.

(This is troublesome...)

With how good the food was it probably had a value of about one hundred silver coins. Even if he was asked to pay gold coins, he would pay without any complaints if he had his wallet. But he couldn't pay what he didn't have. Right now, without his wallet, Heinrich was penniless.

(But I can't not pay... That's right!)

When he first found this place, he had forgot he was on a 'delivery.' Heinrich just now remembered that.

"Owner! I would like to settle the bill, but first I have one request."

"Okay, what is it?"

Calling the owner, Heinrich said that.

"My apologies, but I have no money! In exchange, I will pass this over to you! Next time, I will definitely pay you back! Until then, please hold on to this!"

As he said that, Heinrich passed the famous dwarven sword passed down through his family to the owner.

"Heh!? No, you can just put it on your tab..."

"I will not! This is a sign of my good faith! Don't worry! I will definitely come here again! Right now I must excuse myself due to a dire situation. Until then, I hope to eat your 'fried shrimp' once again!"

As he informed the owner whose eyes were black and white from the sudden affair, Heinrich ran towards the exit.

"Ah!? Sir! If you're going to come again then in seven days..."

"My apologies! I must hurry! The duchy's fate depends on it!"

As the owner's words hit his back, Heinrich dashed out of the restaurant.

Heinrich's feet were light. After having rested at the restaurant and having plenty of fried shrimp, there was no trace of fatigue at all in him.

Steadily, Heinrich made it to the castle just before daybreak and informed the duchy of its crisis.

Knowing how big the situation was, the castle's soldiers moved out and just barely managed to deal with the crisis. And Heinrich, who was the person who performed the best, received honor and compensation. Taking that in hand, Heinrich was utterly speechless.

"Impossible!? The restaurant is gone!?"

'Ten days' after the crisis was solved, Heinrich, who returned to that place he visited, opened his eyes in shock. That day, he definitely visited that restaurant but now there was no shape or shadow of it. In that place was definitely a small hut, a small hut that was abandoned in the past with no human presence whatsoever. But the black door that he saw that day wasn't there.

"Then what was it that I saw that day?"

There were too many questions going through Heinrich's head. It wasn't a dream. That much he was certain of. That was because the dwarven sword that Heinrich handed off was still missing from his side.

——That was the incident from three years ago

It has been three years after that miraculous day.

"Commanding Officer Heinrich. There is a visitor waiting for you."

Having informed the duchy of its crisis and helping the duchy avoid it, Heinrich, who was now in charge of the first brigade of the knightly order, was told by his subordinate about a visitor.

“A visitor? Who is it?”

At those words, Heinrich, who was filled with the presence becoming of a commanding officer, tilted his head. This place was a remote fortress, not a prospering city. He had no idea who would drop by without send a word.

“Yes. Actually it’s one person, and he called for you by name... and he called himself Tatsugorou.”

The subordinated informed him of the visitor’s name.

“What did you say!? Tatsugorou!? In the flesh!?”

Heinrich raised his voice in surprise at that name. He was a foreign master swordsman who came from the western continent and was famous for his military achievements in the eastern continent. Even if you’re not a mercenary, anyone who ever held a sword in their life would shake at the mention of his name.

“Yes, although we didn’t verify if he was the real one, he looks exactly like how he’s described in the bards’ songs...”

The subordinated told the truth of the situation while being bewildered. Wearing a curved samurai sword by his side, a haori crafted by elves and made of magical silver, he was an old man with a large frame. He met all the requirements, and most importantly, he came all the way over to this fortress that was a remote distance to any towns. One person who was average at combat could clear the roads of any loitering monsters.

“I understand. Send him in. And be hospitable.”

After hearing the information, Heinrich decided to meet him and ordered his subordinate. And finally, they met.

“Nice to meet you. I am called Tatsugorou. I will be in your care, Sir Zeeleman.”

An old man fitting the description respectfully lowered his head. With the appearance of a forger and with the rumored samurai sword by his side, it was a large old man. Looking at the man’s appearance, build, and a lion-like presence which suggested he

was on a much faraway level than him, Heinrich's instincts told him. Without a doubt, this man was the real thing.

"No, no. The pleasure is all mine, Sir Tatsugorou! I am a knight of the duchy, Heinrich Zeeleman. Tatsugorou-sama's military exploits are well know!"

Showing the highest amount of regards as he could as a military man, Heinrich greet Tatsugorou. Bound not by a master, an adventurer who would slay countless monsters in exchange for a small amount of money, monsters that couldn't be cut down by the human body, he was a master swordsman who also called a fierce god. When Heinrich was a child and training to become a knight, he would often heard the legendary tale of Tatsugorou many times. Tatsugoro was an object of aspiration for Heinrich.

"But what kind of business do you have here at this fortress in the middle of nowhere?"

Heinrich gave a single cough and asked that question. Having a legendary military man visit was a great honor, but the reason why was still unknown. Hearing that question, Tatsugorou nodded his head and said this.

"...Actually, I was asked by an acquaintance to deliver a lost item to someone."

Saying that, Tatsugorou took out a single sword from behind the sword on his hip.

"This is!?"

Taking the sword, Heinrich opened his eyes in shock.

"Just how, where did you manage to acquire this!?"

It was the famous dwarven sword that he left at that restaurant. As the first son who was supposed to wield it, there was no way Heinrich would mistake it.

Wondering just how Tatsugorou was holding on to the sword that 'went missing' three years ago, Heinrich involuntarily ask him that.

"Like I said, I was asked by an acquaintance. He said that there wasn't any sign of you coming back to get it and not having it would trouble you."

Tatsugorou laughed bitterly and replied to Heinrich, who the owner described as ‘a self-important person who doesn’t listen to what people saying.’

“An acquaintance?... Then that means, it can’t be!?”

As he thought about the meaning of those words, having made the connection, Heinrich drew closer to Tatsugorou.

“Yes, it’s probably just as you’re thinking... Now that I think about it, wasn’t there a ‘Door’ close to this fortress...”

After pushing away Heinrich, Tatsugorou grinned and laugh as he recalled some of the information he came across during his long-time pilgrimage.

“How about it? On tomorrow’s Satur’s Day, want to go eat some fried shrimp?”

Fried shrimp. At the moment those words came out, Heinrich became speechless and then yelling a big voice.

“I can eat fried shrimp!?”

Heinrich remembered the flavors he tasted three years ago... and swallowed his saliva.

“Yes. One time every seven days on a Satur’s Day.”

Tatsugorou answered laughing.

And that was a day that another regular was added to the Other World Dining Hall.

Translator's Notes:

*Schripe as you probably guessed is shrimp.

CHAPTER 4

TOFU STEAK

The young elven woman Faldania looked at the plate in front of her- the plate that used to be filled with the dish that she ate. Her eyes were filled with a mixture of satisfaction and anger.

I was tricked.

The taste of defeat was still in her mouth. That's right. Faldania, the elf hailing from the Sienna Forest, still had not recognized her defeat.



“How was it? Delicious, right?”

She heard the voice of an annoying human man.

To be honest, Faldania did not expect this. A poor human with a short lifespan had made her, an elf, a dish that could give her satisfaction.

Elf, the glorious race that was said to once rule the world. With a high aptitude for magic and culture, it is said that even dragons cannot match them.

These elves normally do not eat any foodstuffs taken from animals. To the clean, pure protectors of the forest, the elves who can who can communicate with the heart of the speechless animals regard the animals living in the forest as ‘friends’... and most importantly, the smell of animals is a bit too strong from them to put into their mouths.

To the elves, animal meat and the like smell unusual enough to make them think it’s not something edible. Due to this, elves do not hunt. The elves’ boasted magic and archery skills were skills that were honed to protect the forest from any invading foreigners.

Perhaps as a price for their long lives, elves have low birth rates. Although they say it’s to keep the population low, the forests where the elves live have a large blessing of tree and flowers, and the things that can be gathered during spring and fall can be preserved with magic which makes it just sufficient to live comfortably. For the savage short-lived humans who have no care when handling magic and mixed beings made from humans and elves (half-elves), meat and fish are what they prefer to eat, but for Faldania who was a ‘legitimate’ elf, she could not consume such things.

Because of these reasons, Faldania gave her order while partly looking down on him, but the man easily agreed to it. A delicious dish that an elf could eat that didn’t use any meat, fish, milk, or eggs. She thought that a savage human man with no shred of subtlety wouldn’t be able to make such a thing.

If he did manage to make such a thing, Faldania thought it would be something akin to the things she usually ate, such as a salad made from fresh, raw vegetables and wild plants picked at their peak or a soup made by boiling together vegetables and mushrooms. If it was something like that, she wouldn’t have been this surprised. If it

was something like that, she would have ended it there saying ‘Humans can do it well after all.’ But it was different. What the man brought out was a dish that Faldania never heard or seen of, but it was certainly delicious.

(So frustrating!... But.)

Faldania knew that she couldn’t go and say ‘It wasn’t tasty’ after cleaning her plate to the last bite or else she would simply be a poor loser. Faldania bit her lips while she recalled how exactly this situation came to be.

(The first mistake was... Right, when I entered this place.)

Right, it was the time just moments ago when she visited ‘The Other World Dining Hall.’

It started when Faldania headed out to hunt for mushrooms in the forest and felt a mysterious magical energy flowing about.

“What could this be? Is this... transportation magic?”

Faldania, who was strolling about the forest like always while collecting fruits and mushrooms, had her long ears twitch and move as they sensed an abnormality. Magic started to gather and distort in an area of the forest where magic easily accumulated as if a spell was being casted. This was something... something like a teleportation circle was occurring. Her father, who once left elves’ forest capital in order to travel alongside humans and hone his magic, was the one responsible for Faldania’s magical knowledge. Elves are a race that are proficient at magic. Even magic casted by the humans who can call themselves excellent magicians can be casted by elves who aren’t even adults at the age of fifty. The magecraft of these long-lasting elves around the age of a hundred can’t even be matched by the likes of humans and dwarves in terms of development.

Because of that, they are sensitive to magic and can sense the invocation powerful spells before they’re even casted supposedly...

“This magic doesn’t seem to be from anyone from the village. For the time being, I should take a look.”

She couldn’t ignore such suspicious magic near the elves’ forest, the Sienna Forest. Faldania went to the place where the magic was used while carrying her favorite bow for self-defense.

(Found it...)

Faldania, after arriving at the location where the magic was activated, found a black door with a picture of a cat and characters unknown to her written on it clinging on a tree in the forest. Of course, such a thing wasn’t the work of some capricious elf. Looking at the facts and feeling the quality of magic coming from the door, Faldania began to make a conjecture.

(...It seems like that tool that uses magic similar to ancient elven magic.)

It was a magic tool made using the magical origins created long ago before Faldania was even born, during the time when the Elves were at their most prosperous time, and used as the basis for today’s most powerful and complicated spells. That was the source of the magic’s activation.

(With magic this strong, its destination is probably an other world.)

Although she was young, among the other elves, Faldania was an excellent magician and could accurately guess the truth behind the magic with her knowledge and wisdom. It seemed like this magic activated after a number of days when the amount of magical power inside of it was at its highest. Judging by the strength of its magical power, there were mostly like other doors resembling this one appearing all over this world.

“...First I should investigate it.”

She put a mark signifying transportation magic on a nearby tree. Even if this door was connected to an other world it should be possible to teleport from this place by force. Once her preparations were taken care of, she opened the door. With the ringing of a bell, the origin of the magic’s activation rang out and resounded. And then.

“Give me some fried seafood! And some whiskey! Give me a ton of whiskey!”

“The usual.”

“...Omelette rice. Extra large. To go, omelette, three of them.”

“Owner, requesting two portions of fried shrimp!”

“Excuse me... one chocolate parfait please.”

What spread before her was one restaurant. Inside of the restaurant was tables and chairs. In those chairs were customers piling on orders for food.

“Oh, welcome. Please go ahead and take an empty seat.”

The man who was carrying dishes and said this to Faldania, who was stunned by the unexpected scene, was mostly this restaurant’s owner. Looking at him suspiciously, Faldania let her curiosity take over and went over to a free table.

“Damn it! My liquor still can’t compete!”

A male dwarf who stunk of metal and had a large hammer next to him was snacking on fish while downing liquor in one gulp. The dwarf let out a sigh and then went on to the next order.

“Umu, as I thought, you have to have this when it’s Satur.”

A thin, old man nodded while consuming golden colored alcohol and fried pork.

“Mu. Seconds.”

With broken words that were translated by magic, the thing that was ordering another egg dish had scars all over its whole body. It was a lizardman warrior, a type of monster that she heard lived in the wetlands.

“Umu! Tartar sauce it good but cutlet sauce matches just as well! As I thought, schripe is amazing!”

A well-built male warrior spoke out as he was eating some kind of ocean dwelling creature.

“...”

Silent and seriously, a young human woman who was wearing a simple yet proper dress which made it clear she was a noble was eating a mysterious object made from cow's milk and covered in something black.

(This place seems to be a restaurant dealing in human food...)

In the middle of these circumstances, Faldania was troubled. To be honest, none of the dishes looked delicious. Just a while ago, she was brought the menu. All the dishes she saw in it was something she never heard about or seen, but looking at the dishes the other customers were eating, Faldania knew. All the dishes here would not suit her taste, an elf's taste.

(Why are the dishes humans make so... barbaric, I wonder?)

Faldania saw that all the dishes had either meat, fish, milk or eggs inside of them. To a legitimate elf living in the forest, those things could not be called 'ingredients' and things made from them could not be called 'cooking.' In other words, it could not be eaten.

(Bread and soups won't do.)

On top of her strong evasive feelings, an elf's senses were sharp. Even if a little bit of meat, fish, milk, or eggs were mixed in, she would be able to tell and thus be unable to eat it.

(This is troubling. It would be rude if I entered a restaurant and didn't eat anything.)

Even the young Faldania who was often treated like a child had the common sense to know that not ordering anything when she was already seated was bad manners.

“Miss. Have you decided on your order?”

Seeing her so troubled, the owner decided to talk to Faldania. Faldania let out a single sigh, and in her own way came to a conclusion... and said this with an ill-nature.

“I guess I have... if there’s a dish that doesn’t have meat, fish, milk, or eggs in it, then I would like that. If not, then I don’t anything. I’ll leave at once. My apologies.”

Like there could be such a thing. As she thought that, she started to stand up as she spoke. But.

“Understood. Thank you for your order. Well then, if it can’t have meat or fish... can you leave the menu to me?”

Just like always, the owner gave a nod and asked Faldania for her confirmation.

“Hey, wait!”

Faldania became flustered at the unexpected response and stood up and raised her voice sharply at the owner.

“...Yes?”

“Just so you know, if you try to hide the flavor or even a little bit is mixed into it, I won’t be able to eat it. Can you still make it?”

“It’s fine. Let’s see, the soup was... miso soup is no good but I could bring out the others properly.

“...I see. Then that’s fine.”

After saying all that, she had no choice but to back down. Faldania quietly took her seat once again.

(I wonder, what exactly is he going to be bringing out? I don’t think a human could easily make such a dish though. A soup made from raw vegetables? But he said soup wasn’t possible...)

If he tried to trick her in a weird way, she made her decision hit him with her complaints.

And then, after a little while.

“Thank you for waiting.”

That dish was left right in front of Faldania.

“What’s this?”

As she saw it, she returned her gaze to the owner’s face and raised her voice. It was a baron’s fruit* cut into eight pieces, then fried in vegetable oil, and finally sprinkled with salt. Brilliant orange Caryute** boiled so that it would be sweet. A boiled and dried, deep-green leafy vegetables. These dishes she was able to understand.

But finally, what was on the black, piping hot iron plate was the main dish. A sizzling sound came from the white thing, it was a dish Faldania never seen before.

“Your tofu steak. The seasoning is ponzu*** mixed with daikon... finished with soup stock made from kelp. I believe that you will be able to eat it, Miss. A young woman just like yourself, Miss, often orders this dish so I sometimes make it. Also bread seemed like it would be no good, so I brought out rice instead. Well, for tofu steak, I believe that rice suits it better. Well, please enjoy.”

The owner said this in reply to Faldania’s muttering and then went to go take another customer’s order.

(...Well, it does seem like there no scent of any animals.)

Without thinking, she brought the plate close to her nose and sniffed it, and judged it from the drifting aroma. What drifted from the dish was the burning smell of an unknown sauce mixed with refreshing fruit from the black, hot plate and the sweet fragrance of the white thing that was fried with fresh vegetable oil. There was no trace of the beastly smell that elves had a hard time dealing with. It seemed like this ‘tofu steak’ was truly the dish that Faldania had order, a dish with no meat, fish, milk, or eggs.

(But, the problem is the taste.)

Having lost her mother to sickness thirty years ago, Faldania, who took care of the chores at home, was known in the Sienna Forest as someone who was good at cooking, and she had confidence in her cooking skills. It was a dish made to please her. Even if it was a dish made to accompany her unreasonable demand, if it tasted bad, there was no point.

“Well then...”

Whether it was because she was nervous or because of the smell, Faldania swallowed her saliva and picked up her knife and fork. She was curious about the side dishes as well, but first she took her knife to the main dish resting atop of the plate.

It felt like it was so soft that it had no resistance when she cut into it.

(...I don't really know what this is. The owner said it was called 'tofu' though.)

She stabbed her fork into one of the four mouth-sized pieces of tofu and looked at it closely. It was grilled until was lightly seared, and its color before it was cooked was unknown. At the very least, it didn't have an unfavorable smell. For time being, she should eat it... was what was supposed to happen.

With grated, snow-white vegetables and a brown sauce covering it, Faldania started to hesitate from eating something she had no knowledge about.

(Anyway... all I can do is just try it out.)

Even if it was terrible, she had to eat at least one bite since it was made to fulfill her order. Reasserting her determination, Faldania put it into her mouth.

(What is this!?)

Fresh astonishment because to spread out in Faldania's heart. The surface which had a savory flavor from being grilled by oil and the flavor of soft insides that were still warm from the heat. The two contrasting sensations began to crumble and melt inside of her mouth. What spread in her mouth from there was the mysterious flavor of the ingredient called tofu. This flavor that Faldania tasted for the first time filled her mouth.

(...When I was little, I feel like I tasted this before, but what was it?)

It had the same soft sensation, a nostalgic flavor. An elf like Faldania might not know but it was the flavor close to the flavor of dairy products that came from animals.

To the elves, milk is not an edible ingredient. Even if they ate it, its raw-stinking smell will come first and won't give them the chance to enjoy it. Because of that, there is only one thing that the elves of the forest can taste the flavor of dairy from.

(That's right... This is mother's flavor.)

Faldania called upon her old, old memories and realized this. For elves, it was a flavor that was limited to the extremely short number of years as an infant that they receive from their mothers.

(This is... an amazing level of perfection.)

After being absentminded from the initial shock, Faldania rolled the crumbling piece of tofu over her tongue. Then she calmly analyzed it and was surprised. What held this simple flavor was the tofu. She realized that the flavor of the tofu was brought up by the sauce covering it.

(Ponzu... is what he called it. It's a little sour and salty... I wonder what this was made from.)

While investigating the flavor of the tofu steak in her mouth, she began to think upon the ponzu sauce that was used to season it. It was made from joining together the juices of a fruit that had no sweetness but instead had a strong sourness with an unknown brown sauce. The brown sauce had a faint flavor similar to the tofu. The sauce which also had a strong saltiness to it would be delicious even by itself.

The assertive sourness and the strong saltiness coming from the brown sauce. What brought these two flavors into a harmony was yet another unknown flavor. Faldania had seen it fifty years ago. It had the smell of the ocean, this something raised these those two flavors to an even greater height.

(To think a human could have such skill...)

As to what held the scent of the ocean, she didn't know. But as to what kind of thing it was, she somehow knew. In the past, she was taught about it by her mother who had traveled the human world. It was a mushroom that had been dried and exposed to the environment. Although she didn't know how, when the mushroom was dried and put into a soup, it would taste better than if it was put in raw.

It was mostly likely the same thing as this. By drying this unknown ingredient, it increased its flavor, and this sauce packed with flavor was made by cooking with it. By adding this unknown flavor with the two strong flavors from before, perfection was made. This level of cooking was far above Faldania's.

(If it was just that, it would've been delicious enough...)

What joined with it as well was the strong, savory-smelling herbs and the snow-white grated vegetable. This vegetable, which had a salty but with a faint bitter taste, mixed with the sour and salty sauce, and together they made a delicious, complicated combination of flavors and smells. And thanks to the unique strong-smelling herbs, after taking a bite, the scent of the herbs remained in her nose and refreshed her.

This complicated sauce combined with, if she had to say, the simple and plain flavor of the tofu made a dish that gave a feeling of satisfaction when it was eaten.

(...Something like this was made by a human!)

Faldania was shocked. Humans were a short-lived race where many would be born and would soon die out. They did not have a magnificent culture like the noble elves did.

Is what she thought. But Faldania was a smart girl and therefore understood. This dish was something that surpassed the dishes today's elves could make, an unsurpassable dish. She chewed her frustration and together with her tofu steak.

The rice that accompanied the tofu steak had a sweetness every time she bit into it, and it contrasted with the seasoned tofu steak, making it a delicious match. And also, she didn't miss out on experiencing the deliciousness of the side dishes which included fried Baron's fruit with a crunchy outside, boiled sweet Caryute, and perfectly salted green leafy vegetables which made her even more frustrated.

(I won't allowed us to lose like this!)

Faldania, while indulging in flavors she never had before in her life, had a fire lit in her heart. Right at that moment, an elf's usual habit leaked out of her. As expected, Faldania's lofty pride made her find her purpose at that moment.

The next day.

"Um, are you really going to go, Faldania?"

Faldania's father, who from the perspective of a human would look just as young as Faldania even though his age reached around 300 years, asked this uneasily.

He knew because 150 years ago he himself had left the Sienna Forest out of curiosity to go on a journey though the human world. The human world had terrifying monsters and demons roaming about, and it was extremely dangerous. It wasn't once or twice that he himself would've died in a dangerous situation if it weren't for an old friend, who is now devoting himself to the magical arts in the elven capital, and his wife, an elf from a different forest who was skilled in both magic and archery.

According to some outside sources, putting aside about the monsters, because the demons lost the war against the humans they lost some of their strength. It's been around seventy years since the humans defeated the evil god that the demon's worshiped and the demons lost the war. Because such a short period of time that wasn't even a hundred years shouldn't have changed the world, he wanted to say it wasn't peaceful enough for a young elf to journey across the world by herself.

Because his precious, precious daughter who was barely just a child wanted to leave the Sienna Forest that he himself protected, he was feeling extremely uneasy.

"Of course!... I'll be fine. I'm already an adult."

But Faldania's resolve wouldn't be weakened by her worried father's persuasions. With her pride as an elf wounded, she couldn't live comfortably in the forest.

She had to go on a journey. It was in order to make a dish that was even tastier than the ones at the Other World Dining Hall. Rather than recklessness born from youth, Faldania had a firm belief.

“Like hell you’re an adult! You’re still too young Faldania!”

Faldania’s father who lost his wife thirty years ago due to illness raised his voice in objection. Even if her body was finished growing, her mind was still too inexperienced. From her father’s point of view, Faldania was child he had to protect for another hundred years.

“Mou! I’ll be fine! So stop worrying! I’ll definitely be able to make something delicious for you to eat, papa!”

Faldania who reached the limits of her patience said this as she left the house as if she were flying away.

“Ah, wait! At least take this letter...”

Shaking off her father’s words, she casted magic to strengthen her body and dashed out like the wind. And just like that, what she saw as she left the Sienna Forest wasn’t the trees of the forest but a wide prairie.

“That’s right! I’m going to make delicious food! More delicious than the human at the Other World Dining!”

And so Faldania ran off. In order to get back the pride she lost. On a journey to bring forth wondrous food.

After that, a wondrous elven style of cooking using beans was born that used no meat, fish, eggs, or milk and was given high praise by races all over. The person who created it was a legendary chef who was only 130 years when she set out during her younger days.

Translator's notes:

*A baron's fruit is what those on the other side call potatoes.

**A caryute is what those on the other side call carrots.

*** Ponzu a citrus-based sauce commonly used in Japanese cuisine. Ponzu is made by simmering rice vinegar, seaweed and other ingredients. The ponzu used in this chapter is called Oroshi Ponzu which is basically ponzu with grated daikon.

CHAPTER 5

BEEF STEW

Saturdays at the Other World Dining Hall started the same as the other weekdays, with prep work for the food.

The time was six in the morning. The owner got ready by getting out of bed and getting dressed. Then in the same building where his home was also located in, he took the elevator, which was mainly used to bring down ingredients, from the third floor to one floor below ground where the ‘cathouse’ was to begin his work.

On Saturday mornings, the first thing that needed prep work was the beef stew. Doing prep work for beef stew using the largest business-sized stockpot in the restaurant was the routine.

After using his long-time favorite wok to nimbly stir-fry vegetables and cuts of beef shank, he then moved them over to the stockpot to let them cook together. Around the time that all of the scum had been removed, he took the large amounts homemade demi-glace sauce that he made during his free time and added it to the pot. Calmly and carefully, he simmered it anxiously.

Beef stew was the most expensive thing on the menu in the cathouse if you excluded the things on the party menu that was meant to feed several people. Although, even though he said that, it only costed 1000 yen per serving because of the restaurant’s principles. Because it wouldn’t have the restaurant’s taste unless he cooked a large portion of it, continuing from the previous owner’s time, it was the current owner’s style to do prep work for about hundred heavy servings worth of stew.

Well now, at the cathouse or Other World Dining Hall, there were very few customers who ordered beef stew. From the start, Saturdays weren’t as busy as the battlefields that the weekdays were, and the amount of customers that came could be handled by the owner alone. There also weren’t many customers that ordered the very plainly described ‘cow’s meat stewed soup’ which was the most expensive item out of the varied and large amount of dishes with a price of one silver coin.

If they tried it once, they would probably be surprised by its flavor and softness, but with the price of one silver coin (about the cathouse's and the Other World's money, it was decided that one copper coin was worth 100 yen, one silver coin was 1,000 yen, and one gold coin was 100,000 yen) there wasn't much of a chance of it being ordered.

But, in the Other World Dining Hall, over the past twenty years, there hasn't been a single instance where there was left over beef stew. The reason for that was...

Moving her nose as she sniffed, the Red Queen sensed that the time had come.

—So it has come.

She picked up the scent of small amounts of magic using her sense of smell. The scent spilled from below the Red Queen's stomach... If a human saw it, their eyes would spin from looking at that mountain of gold. The Red Queen had taken it from here and there using force, and inside that mountain that took her roughly one thousand years to make, the smell of magic continued to leak out.

The Red Queen, as though she were showing off her delight, spread out her wings and let out a single cry, a roar of great joy. The queen's voice made the castle of a mountain move and shake, causing all living inside of it to shiver in fear. After that, with one blow that was enough to crush a rock or cut down a giant tree, she pushed her way with a giant claw through the precious treasures that she collected all over the world.

—Found it.

And finally, the landmark that the Red Queen was looking for showed itself inside of the golden mountain. A black door tinged with magic and with the picture of a cat drawn on it. From the other side of it, otherworldly smells leaked out and intoxicated her.

“DID YOU CALL FOR ME, MY QUEEN?”

In the meantime, from the previous roar... hearing the sound of his mistress's voice, a balrog butler, a demon of flames that served as the Red Queen's right arm and follower,

showed himself and respectfully lowered his head. Going by looks, he appeared unrefined but from his state of utter respect towards the queen, the Red Queen nodded in satisfaction.

—Depart this evening. Therefore.

The Red Queen shook her body... and casted a spell with an extensively large amount of magic that few could top in the world.

This spell used was a variant. The Red Queen, with a body about the size of a small mountain, was completely covered by flame and then swallowed up. Inside of that bright-red burning fire, the queen's giant body became smaller like a piece of ice inside of boiling water.

As if following suit, the pure red flame that covered the queen became smaller as well... before leaving behind a single figure, it disappeared. The leftover figure was a woman with the beauty of a goddess.

Her hair shined a bright red as if it were a blazing flame, and her skin was the color of polished copper. Her age seemed to be at the peak of womanhood. Finally, she had golden pupils vertically dividing the middle of her fiery red eyes, and growing from the area above her ears, she had two splendid horns which revealed the woman's true nature.

The woman... taking on the appearance of a human with a spell of transformation, the Red Queen, as if showing off her naked body like a fine piece of art, exposed herself with a dignified manner and commanded.

“Prepare my dress. The usual one. Do you understand?”

“YES, BY YOUR COMMAND.”

While seeing off the balrog who respectfully lowered his head and went to go get the thing his mistress asked of him, the Red Queen lied spread out on top of a pile of gold coins.

“My word, this cannot go on. To think, I, who lived for over 15,000 years, am getting impatient waiting for just one day.”

What was reflected in the eyes of the queen who was currently lying down was the black door which lead to the next world.

In the past, the queen and an inhabitant of the other side of that door were bound together by one oath. On the day the Other World Dining Hall opened, the queen would visit once all the other customers have left and become the final customer.

Long ago, when she went during the daytime to that other world, she would lightly glare at anything that would try to take her ‘prey’ away from her, and that made the owner who was a human say this to her. According to him ‘You’re bothering the other guest, so could you please stop that?’

The queen was a prideful existence that wouldn’t care about a promise with a human, but she wasn’t someone who couldn’t understand what he was trying to tell her. It was true that out of the meals that she, who was one of the great six*, was watching over, there were some that resided right in her own mountain. To the lizard-like things that had no knowledge and with physical strength that couldn’t even compare to the balrog which served the queen, it was easy to understand the reasoning that she was an existence that they didn’t like or even compete against.

Also the words that ‘that’ wouldn’t come out if she couldn’t uphold her promise helped the Queen do everything to protect it... and if she protected her promise, the fact that the queen could profit from it worked its way into her as well.

With that circumstance, the Red Queen, while sniffing the drifting fragrances coming from the other side of the door, waited for night to fall.

“IT IS TIME, MY QUEEN.”

“Umu.”

At the butler balrog’s voice, the queen got to her feet.

“YOUR CLOTHES.”

“Aah.”

With his huge body that seemed brutish, the balrog dressed the queen in a red dress with unbelievably practiced and delicate hand motions. Without any jewelry or makeup... the queen's body was more beautiful than anything else in this world and did not require such things.

“Well then, I will be departing.”

“I WILL BE WAITING FOR YOUR RETURN.”

After finishing all of her preparations, the queen lifted what the balrog carried over with one hand. With the shape of a large cylinder, it was a silver pot that was diligently polished by her subordinates. For a human, they would have difficulty lifting it up with two hands never mind one hand, but with the queen's physical strength, it was no different than lifting up a feather. Lightly lifting it up, the queen passed through the door.

“I have come, owner.”

The Queen, while listening to the pleasant sound of the door's bell ringing out, said that to the owner.

“Welcome. What would today's order be?”

The owner was used to this and asked her in the same way he always did.

“It's obvious, isn't it? There is only one thing that I always request.”

Putting down the pot she was shouldering... she told him her order.

“Beef stew. First, I will partake in one serving.”

It was something that was decided ever since that door showed up at the queen's castle twenty-four years ago. The queen said the name of the magnificent dish that was worthy of her.

Thus, it had been around seven days since she last came to face with it. What wafted out to her was the complex smell of meat, vegetables, and the various seasonings coming from the beef stew. First, the queen enjoyed that smell. Just by roasting it and then boiling it together, the smell coming from the beef and vegetables intoxicated the queen.

“Aah, this smell. This will forever tempt me.”

The complex soup had a deep, thick substance to it from cooking together the meat and vegetables. It was something that no one had yet created in the world the queen lived in, the flavor of the other world. Compared to this, the whole roasted cow that the queen herself cooked and enjoyed before she knew of beef stew couldn't even be called cooking.

“Well then, let us partake.”

Taking in one breath and swallowing her saliva, she scooped up some soup with her spoon... and had a taste. What filled her mouth was the rich flavor of meat and vegetables condensed into the soup. The deliciousness of the lightly grilled meat which was then boiled to its very limit, the sweetness that grew the longer the nameless vegetables were perfectly cooked, the countless herbs and spices, and the alcohol that was added while it was cooking made a delicious flavor that was no different than it was seven days ago.

“...Delicious!”

As it directly hit the queen's stomach, those words leaked out of her mouth. Unable to endure it anymore, she took her silver spoon and brought it back between her mouth and the dish a few times, savoring it little by little. After enjoying enough of the soup, she scooped up an orange-colored vegetable, which was simmered for a long time, together with a light-yellow vegetable, which was added near the end so as to stop it from falling apart while cooking, along with plenty of soup and brought it to her mouth.

“Umu. As I thought, this soup's vegetables are considerably good.”

The flavor of the orange vegetables that were soft as though they were melting and packed full of soup and the flavor of the soft but firm light-yellow vegetables that still retained their heat and flavor because they weren't boiled together mixed together with the flavor of the soup. Usually, the queen did not like the 'feed of the long-eared' also known as vegetables, but vegetables in such a rich soup like this was one of her favorites.

Spoon by spoon, the queen scooped up vegetables and chewed on them while drinking in the soup. Unexpectedly, she never put a hand on her number one favorite thing in the soup... the queen was the type who saved their favorite food for the end.

"...Now then."

After savoring her vegetables and seeing that there was only half of the beef stew left, the queen finally moved on to her favorite part, the main ingredient of the beef stew. The ingredient that makes beef stew into beef stew. In other words, cow meat. Cut up finely into small pieces to fit the size of the human mouth, the stewed cow meat was scooped by her spoon. She swallowed her spit as she brought the well-stewed meat that seemed like it would just break apart by itself into her mouth.

Words couldn't come out. The well-cooked cow's meat crumbled and melted inside of her mouth. She was too busy savoring the flavor the meat and the soup covering it that she didn't have the time to say anything.

—Hou.

Before long, after the meat inside of her mouth disappeared, and she let out a sigh. This instant, no matter how many hundreds of time, no matter how many thousands of times, she would never get tired of it. The queen quickly and repeatedly moved her spoon.

The flavor of the meat and vegetables melted together, the complex seasoning spread far and wide into the soup. Carrying that, the vegetables that soft and had a deep flavor. And finally, most importantly of all, the well-stewed soft meat. With every spoonful, the taste changed, and with every spoonful, she wanted to eat more. To the Red Queen, beef stew was in fact the taste of magic itself.

After that, the queen spent plenty of time finishing up the rest of the meat, and after enjoying and finishing up one serving of beef stew, she stood up.

“Owner. The same as usual. Do you understand?”

As she said that, the queen, keeping the oath she made with the previous owner that was an old man, passed along two gold coins that she picked up from the golden mountain. It was very little, but since it was something promised there was nothing she could do about it.

One time, the queen gave the previous owner a single pot full of gold as payment for the beef stew. But the owner plainly refused it. He said ‘It’s my policy not to rip-off or give discounts.’

After that, the owner then convinced her that it was fine to pay the price one gold coin for one large pot, and the queen’s payment was promised to be two gold coins. Even to the current owner, that still hasn’t changed.

“Yes, certainly. Well then, please carry it back.”

The owner took the extremely heavy, pure gold coins, which was etched with a face with long ears the resembled an elf from the other side, and put it into his pocket. He then gave a single nod.

“Umu. Well then, I will intrude upon you.”

Receiving the owner’s permission, the queen stepped forth into the kitchen. There was no firewood inside of it, and the insides of the kitchen were beautifully polished. There, the queen found it.

—Found it.

With a ‘Hou,’ she let out a sigh filled with excitement with a little bit of flame mixed into it. Shooting off a strong smell from the kitchen was, from a human’s perspective, a large stock pot filled to the brim with beef stew, which was small from her perspective.

“Well then, I will be taking it, owner.”

As she said that, the queen gently lifted the pot which was full on the inside and covered so that it wouldn't spill. What passed through to the palm of her hand was the warmth from the heat of the pot. Thinking about it happily, she lightly moved her feet and headed to the exit in high spirits.

"Until then. I will come again, owner."

"Of course, I will await your return anytime."

As the owner opened the door for her, she left the restaurant. She lowered her feet on the top of the golden mountain that spread out from outside the door, and while taking care not to spill the contents of the pot, she stood up. As the door slammed shut, it also disappeared, and the queen's mountain once again took back its usual atmosphere.

"WELCOME HOME, MY QUEEN."

"Umu. Make it clean."

Casually taking off her dress, she threw it to the balrog. After that, she dispelled her magic and placed the beef stew on a flat piece of land so that it wouldn't spill. She then immediately moved over the gold back to its original spot and buried the location of where the door would appear.

—Now then, it's time to enjoy.

After that, the queen, while being careful and paying attention, tightly wrapped the stockpot with her front legs. Trying not to burn it with the palm of her hands, which could melt iron by the heat emitting from them if she was serious, and being extremely careful as to heat it up so that it won't be cold, she kept it at its best temperature.

And finally, bringing it closer to her mouth from which sharp fangs grew, she stuck her tongue inside of it and literally savored it by licking. The beef stew that she tasted as a human was good, but eating it in her original form was also special in its own way.



—Still, if only the owner made a lot more.

While she thought of that, she steadily savored it. It would be a whole day and night before it would be gone. The time for the queen's bliss had come.

Once, having burned down troops of the long-eared equipped with magic tools and leading golems and chimeras with them to oblivion, she was currently worshiped and feared as a legendary existence... and at the same time, the Red Queen, who was known as the Other World's Dining Hall's 'biggest eater', had just begun her meal.

Translator's note:

*One of the six refers to one of the six legendary demon dragons. Had to do a bit of digging for that information.

CHAPTER 6

MEAT SAUCE

The previous head of the Alfade Company, Thomas Alfade, was the forefather of the Alfade family who revived it by selling various ingredients made from wheat.

The many influential vassal states which existed from the Old Kingdom's time, which was the first human country that was destroyed a very long time ago, crowded around the royal kingdom's capital, a capital that was said to be the most prosperous of all capitals. In the royal capital, there were many companies that were old but not very big. One of them was the Alfade Company.

What this Alfade Company dealt in was processed goods made from wheat, in particular, noodles made of dried and kneaded wheat. Although preserving them was easy because they were dried, the fact that you needed a large amount of hot, boiled water and the fact that the flavoring was plain caused it to be unpopular. That meant that noodles would be placed as the same rank as other commoner foods and could only be found in people's homes or at cheap bars. The person who would make it into a staple for the nobles and in turn raise the Alfade Company to the number one leading company in the capital was Thomas.

The secret to Thomas's success were the many sauces that he devised. A sauce suited for the commoners made from milk and wheat flour. A sauce made from sautéed mushrooms added together with a fish sauce that was unfamiliar to the kingdom which was made from fermented fish and made by a maritime nation from the Western Continent. A daring sauce made from pickled fish eggs, which was a famous product from a port in the west that was thriving with international trade or a sauce using those same pickled eggs but with the addition of a spicy powdered togaran* which gave it a new sharp taste.

The Alfate trademark noodle sauces greatly raised up the status of noodles, which were until then were only simply seasoned with salt, cheese, honey, or pepper. The people demanded more of the noodles and the novel and delicious tasting sauces that Thomas came up with, and the Alfade Company, which was just a small company at

the time, quickly grew into the kingdom's leading company. And Thomas who accomplished this was known as the 'Genius of Culinary Innovation.'

But, Thomas knew. He was not a genius, but he simply had a stroke of good luck. Inside of the dark recesses of his home's wheat warehouse, there was a quiet, still, black door. The one who somehow found it was Thomas, an active merchant.

From their world's point of view, for almost the thirty years that the store was open (the store itself was actually open for around fifty years apparently), Thomas had for seven days times four, once every 28 days, visited the restaurant not as a customer but as a merchant.

Now he had left position of the head of the company to his son and stopped doing business as he went into retirement. But, Thomas had made a promise with the previous owner. To keep both of their 'businesses' running, they promised that they would continue to have a 'deal.' After retiring and having plenty of free time, like every Satur's Day such as today, Thomas prepared to head to the restaurant.

"—Alright, that should do it."

After checking his favorite backpack, which he had and cared for since he was young and could carry many things, for the things the various goods that the owner asked of him, Thomas let that one sentence out.

You could only use a 'door' at the same place once every Satur's Day. Once the door was closed, or if the door was open for the short time of about 300 seconds, the door would disappear, and entering would then become impossible. That was the rule of the door leading to the Other World Dining Hall that Thomas had heard from the other customers. For that reason, Thomas diligently prepared before he passed through that door.

After finishing his preparations, it was now time to go, and he raised his voice to his grandson who would be coming with him for the first time.

"Alright, let us go, Sirius."

“This door is connected to an other world... is this really true, grandfather? But, it’s true that it’s unnatural that such a fine door would be inside our company’s old warehouse...”

Thomas’s grandson, the young man that would be next generation of Alfade Company’s successors, had a confused face.

“Well, it’s true.”

What his grandson pointed out wasn’t unreasonable, is what Thomas thought and then laughed. A door connected to an other world is something that an adventurer would travel here and there for or would have to do with an elf who was versed in fearsome magic. It was a sort of fairytale that had nothing to do with a mere merchant. The only person who would openly believe that a door in the middle of the city would let you go back and forth to an other world would be an idiot with his head in the clouds.

“If you’ll go, you’ll know. Don’t worry, it’ll be fine. Even if you went to the other world, it wouldn’t be that much different from our world. Most importantly, what’s over there is the store that could be said to be our Alfade Company’s benefactor.”

As he said that, he put his hand on the brass-work door knob and turned it. As the well-maintained door knob turned, the sound of a bell ringing sounded out as the door opened.

“Benefactor’s store?... What kind of store is it?”

As he tried to push himself through to the other side of the door, his grandson asked this.

“The Other World Dining Hall... it’s a restaurant.”

As Thomas answered, he passed through the door. Contrasting with the dark warehouse, the bright interior of the restaurant spread out before Thomas’s eyes.

“Welcome... Aah, if it isn’t Thomas. Please wait for moment.”

As they went through the door, the owner of the restaurant had just finished wiping down the tables with a wet cloth. Coming from the kitchen, only the sound of pot bubbling and boiling could be heard. There were no other customers. To make sure he wasn't a hindrance to other customers, Thomas came at an early time before they would even come.

"Aah, is it alright if we sat down somewhere while we wait?"

"Of course, I just finished wiping down that table over there so sitting down there should be alright. By the way, who is this person next to you?"

"Nice to meet you. I am Thomas's grandson, Sirius. Thank you for always helping my grandfather."

At the owner's inquiry, Sirius lowered his head with the courtesy befitting of a merchant.

"Just as you heard, he is my grandson. From now on I'll be bring him along every now and then, so take care of him when he does."

"I see, your grandson. There's certainly some resemblance with Thomas when he was younger."

The owner nodded and replied.

From around thirty years ago, Thomas had been acquainted with the owner even when he was still a young child, and the owner knew much of Thomas who was a regular and a close acquaintance of his grandfather. The two of them spent a long time with one another and had the relationship of equal business partners as well as the relationship of close friends flowing between them.

"Well then, first I'll bring out some coffee. Please wait just a moment."

AS the owner said that, he headed to the back of the restaurant.

"Coffee?"

“A kind of other world tea. It’s black and has a bitter taste. Once you get used to it, it’s pretty tasty, and it’ll give you some energy when you drink it.”

While Thomas gave a simple explanation about coffee, he gave a heart-warming gaze at his grandson who looked around and around at the restaurant’s interior.

“You’re curious, aren’t you?”

“Yes. Is this the other world?”

What was reflected in Sirius’s eyes which looked about restlessly were only things that he was unfamiliar with.

“That’s right. Make sure to look closely. You understand that everything here is outside of our general knowledge right?”

“...I see. It certainly is.”

With Thomas’s words and his own eye for value as a merchant of the capital, Sirius became convinced. The lighting gave off the light of magic even though it should’ve been dark inside, and beautifully shaped glass bottles were arranged. Looking closely, he saw that the container holding some kind of black liquid was not made from pottery or glass even though he could still see through it, but it was made from some unknown material. This certainly was past the level of cultural difference of a foreign country.

“Thank you for waiting. Your coffee.”

As they had that conversation, the owner brought out some coffee. A fragrant smell drifted from the black liquid that was poured into two cups, and milk was put into a small metal water pitcher. These two things were placed in front of them.

“Ooh, sorry for the trouble.”

“No problem at all. Anyway, I’ll bring over the proceeds so please wait for a little while.”

As the owner said that, he once again headed back into the kitchen.

“Now then, let’s partake, shall we? Sirius, sorry but could you pass that blue pot... could you get me some sugar?”

“Ah, yes. This is some very high-quality sugar. It’s pure white.”

Sirius took the sugar pot and took two spoonfuls of sugar, which was no doubt similar to the high-class white sugar that the Alfade Company sold, and mixed it into the coffee. Taking it with two spoons of sugar and no milk was the way that Thomas liked it after experimenting over the long years.

“Umu, delicious.”

While Thomas drank his coffee, he remembered that a customer from this restaurant told him about a drink called Caffa which was similar to this in a desert country, located on the far other side of the ocean, that the kingdom have very few dealings with. Feeling the skills of the worker who purified it, the pure sweetness of the sugar that had no unnecessary taste to it and the unique fragrance of the coffee jumped together and spread in his mouth, and the bitter taste with a slight sourness to it brought about a sense of harmony. The heat and the sweet bitterness passed through his tongue and soaked into his body.

With a ‘hou,’ he felt the sensation of his body relaxing and the sensation of hot energy welling up from the bottom of his body. Thomas secretly looked forward to whenever he came to this restaurant and got treated to some ‘free’ coffee.

“Hey now, you should drink it too before it gets cold. Try putting in some sugar. That’s my favorite but milk is good too. It has a soft flavor to it.”

“Okay... I’ll have some.”

Learning from his grandfather, Sirius also took two spoons of sugar before drinking a mouthful to make sure of the flavor. Afterwards, he then poured in plenty of milk.

“I see. It has a unique bitterness and sourness to it, but pretty delicious. This is.”

With plenty of milk, the coffee which now had a soft sweetness to it made Sirius’s face smile broadly.

Thanks to the Magic War finally coming to a pause, they could finally have large scale mercantile operations after who knows how many decades. Although the price of the sugar that was processed from the sugarcane they picked in the south had been falling thanks to the sugar that they got from the Western Continent, it was still a valuable product that costed silver coins to say nothing of the high-grade white sugar which price hardly changed. The Alfade Company valued a fat purse more than being poor nobles, so it was the family motto that any profits that they earned wouldn't be used on any luxuries. Because of that, there weren't many opportunities to taste such sweet things such as this.

(To be this pleased with sweets... Looks like he's still a child.)

While pleasantly looking at Sirius who was knitting his eyebrows from the heat of the coffee as he drank it down in one gulp, Thomas thought this. Sirius, who was the son of a large company ever since he was born and lacked the shamelessness that merchants who worked their way up had, was Thomas's favorite quick-witted grandson. The two of them enjoyed the other world's coffee, and around the time they had finished drinking, the owner came back with a metal box under his arm.

"Thank you for waiting. I brought this month's proceeds for the Other World Dining Hall. Do you mind if I hold on to that bag for you?"

"Aah, I'm counting on you. We'll do the calculations in the meantime."

Thomas gave back the empty cups and the bag he took with him over to the owner.

"Yes, this is certainly it. Well then, I'll just leave this right up here."

As the owner picked up the heavy looking bag, he then opened the metal box.

"Uwa... eight ancient elven gold coins."

"...Umu. The same as usual."

These gold coins that were somehow always in there every time were normally in the hands of aristocrats or wealthy merchants or on an elf himself or taken from some elven ruins by a skilled adventurer. If not, then you were out of luck finding them.

Manufactured over one thousand years ago, these coins had the highest value to them as of now. There were eight of these ancient valuable gold coins, 41 silver coins of various origins, and around 700 copper coins.

Inside that metal box was crammed with one month of the Other World Dining Hall's proceeds.

"Fumu. There's a little bit more to this month's sales."

Thomas saw the general amount with the skills of a proficient merchant.

"This is... this shop's proceeds?"

"That's right. And also..."

He nodded as he answered. Looking after this restaurant's monthly proceeds was Thomas's responsibility.

"Inside of that bag is compensation."

The 'merchandise' that Thomas brought was compensation.

"Inside of that bag... is ingredients?"

The merchandise that Thomas brought was full of high-grade foodstuffs, the Other World Dining Hall's ingredients, that couldn't be handled or prepared unless it was the Alfade Company's doing. There was wheat, livestock meat, and all sorts of vegetables. There were things that you could find at the marketplace but also trade good that were transported a long ways from foreign countries and delicacies that could only be obtained from monsters that were defeated by hunters and adventurers. Trading the Other World Dining Hall's proceeds with those said things was the deal between Thomas and the Other World Dining Hall.

"That's right. Well, every now and then I bring in high-grade healing medicine and other things that can't be found here. Normally, I sell ingredients though."

"I see..."

Sirius nodded at his grandfather's words. It certainly was a deal fitting for the Alfade Company that was good at handling things like foodstuff for the kingdom.

"But what is he going to do with those ingredients? There's not enough amount for this restaurant's cooking, I think."

Looking at the situation, the Other World Dining Hall's one month proceeds didn't even reach an amount of ten gold coins. Thinking about the fact that the restaurant was open once every seven days, one day's proceeds should be a little more than two gold coins. The amount of ingredients that the old man Thomas brought over wouldn't be enough.

"Aah, you see, the owner himself is going to eat it apparently."

Thomas had that same question in his head when he started this deal with the previous owner and asked him directly. The answer to his question was that.

"Eat it? The owner of this restaurant will?"

"Aah, the previous owner was the same. Apparently he's using it to study their flavors."

The ingredients that Thomas brought weren't enough to give to the restaurant's customers, and apparently there's a problem with something called 'sanitation' so he couldn't give it to the customers. Therefore, he'll eat it himself. This is what the previous owner and current owner called 'research.'

"Research?"

"I don't know the thought process of a chef myself..."

He gave a simple introductory explanation to Sirius who still had a bewildered face. In the past, he heard from the owner the reason why he wanted ingredients from the Other World.

The Other World Dining Hall welcomed people from Thomas's world as customers. Therefore, what was delicious to the tongue for a Japanese person... a person from an Other World like the owner was slightly different. Luckily, there weren't any big differences, but unfortunately, there were still some differences.

Therefore, in order to match their tastes, he tasted the ingredients that Thomas brought, and then he would season it to make it taste like the dishes that were made from ingredients from his own world. Like that, he would tune it to match the mouths of the inhabitants from Thomas's world.

"To go through all that... even though he won't see of a profit."

As he heard that story, Sirius made a face that seemed like he was convinced but still wasn't convinced. Truthfully, looking at the proceeds that came from opening the Other World Dining Hall once every seven days, the rate didn't add up.

"Well, to the owner, the Other World Dining Hall seems to be a hobby in itself it seems. Seeing the customers eat delicious things and be merry seems to be fun for him.... The current owner seems to resemble the previous owner in that regard."

As he persuaded his grandson, Thomas laughed. He remembered that the previous owner was a person who treated cooking like a job and hobby as well. The Other world Dining Hall has been open in Thomas's world for thirty years. Thomas knew that the fact the restaurant that the two of them loved and continued was due to the fruit of their labor.

"Thanks for the all the hard work. All the goods were definitely delivered."

As they had that conversation, the owner came back with two menus.

"As always, I'll treat you to one item so order anything you'd like. You too, Sirius."

While he said that like it was a habit, he placed the two menus in front of them.

"I'll have the same as always... that's right, a large serving of spaghetti with meat sauce. Sirius, would you like that too?"

"Yes, I'll leave it to you, grandfather."

Nodding at their orders, the owner headed back to the kitchen. After a short while, what they were looking for came.

"Thank you for waiting. Your meat sauce."

In front of the two of them, an emerald green tube and a shiny silver fork together with a large plate filled with plenty of a noodle dish was placed down. Covered on top of it was a bright red sauce filled with thin, minced pieces of meat.

“Umu. As I thought, you have to have spaghetti with meat sauce.”

The meat sauce that he had countless times at this restaurant... to Thomas, it was the taste of the beginning. Over thirty years he had increased his repertoire of noodle dishes in the pursuit of flavor. There was the time where he ate this and that including meat sauce and napolitan which formed a matchless pair, but finally he decided on this as his last ‘goal.’

“Huh? This is... grandfather?”

Once Sirius noticed that he seen this dish before, he became confused. With a troubled face, he look to Thomas for an answer. But Thomas ignored that and said this.

“What, you’ll know once you eat it. You’ll know various things. Now, let’s eat before it gets cold.”

Taking the well-polished fork that was left next to the plate in hand thrust it into the meat sauce. Gently stirring the red sauce that was filled with plenty of thin, minced pieces of meat, he entwined the sauce closely with the noodles, and then he coiled a mouthful’s worth around his fork. With a gulp of saliva, he stuffed his cheeks.

Delicious. Every time he had it, that one simple word always came up in his thoughts. Meat... in the Other World’s words it is expressed as ‘niku.’ Sauce stewed together with the flavor of meat. The strong flavor of the soft cow’s meat that was not raised to plow the fields but raised for the sole purpose of eating and the flavor of the pig’s meat which was raised with the same care and covered in fat spread inside of his mouth together. Simply grilling and then eating them as is would be tasty enough, but instead they went through the trouble of finely mincing them and stewing them together, mixing the two different flavors of the meats and creating a flavor that couldn’t be found in either of them. Normally, it was a technique used to cover up cheap, bad, or rotting meat but when used with high-quality meat, it gave birth to a new flavor.

And the foundation for the meat sauce that wrapped around the high-quality meat was the flavor of the Other World's vegetable that closely resembled a boiled marmette.** He remembered ten years ago in a remote small country, whose name was hardly known to the people living in the kingdom, the excitement he felt when he put one of the few dried marmette fruits in his mouth as he savored his food. The vegetable which was cooked well until it completely broke down into a liquid gave off a sourness with a hint of sweetness along with plenty of delicious flavor. The bright red marmette sauce matched with the meat as they raised their flavors together.

(Fumu... thinly sliced mushrooms and crushed roasted berries, along with oranie fried in oil and a variety of herbs.)

After he slowly swalled his noodles, he let out a breath. When was it that he could tell apart the numerous ingredients that gave this sauce its complex sensation? When he could barely be called a young man, the meat sauce that the previous owner made for him when he first came here could only be described as delicious as he scarfed it down. That's how impactful it was. It was something unthinkable when looking at the simple tasting noodles that his own house sold.

“...Fumu. How is it? Sirius. The flavor of the Other World's noodle cuisine.”

He called out to his grandson who took one bite and became lost for words. After Sirius was dumbfounded for a while, he spontaneously asked Thomas this.

“Why does this restaurant have something that we haven't even released yet!?”

That's right, he remembered this flavor. It was a sauce that they recently managed to make thanks to the collaboration of the peasants who stocked up money and scholars from the small mountain country using the fresh new vegetable, marmette, which they managed to grow in the kingdom's fields.

It was a 'new' noodle sauce that was supposed to be sold during the summer. The flavor which closely resembled it... but greatly refined it spread out on Sirius's mouth.

“Impossible... It can't be!?”

Instinctively, Sirius looked at the menu filled with unknown names and their descriptions... and was convinced. The meaning of the words 'benefactor's store' that his grandfather spoke of.

"...Grandfather, you."

"That's right. The words genius of culinary innovation is a lie. I went... 'over there' and just simply ate."

He laughed as he admitted it. He glad that the day the truth came out finally came.

Thomas Alfade was a merchant. If there was any incentive, to profit and do business was the belief of a merchant. That was the start of the Alfade Company's glory.

"Now then, let's finish eating."

As he said that, he took the green tube and the glass bottle filled with a red juice that was left on the table.

"What's inside this green tube is ground, powdered cheese. When you cover the meat sauce with it, it gives it a mild taste. And this red juice is a sauce called tabasco. It has the spiciness of togaran and the sourness of vinegar... it'll tighten up the flavor of the meat sauce."

As he gave an explanation to his grandson who was eating it for the first time, he prudently poured some out. Like this, you could change the flavor to your own preference. It was the fun of meat sauce.

"Be careful for your first time. Add too much and you'll hurt the flavor of the meat sauce."

As he remembered the failures he had in the past, he warned his grandson and then took the two of them in his hand.

First, he ate the meat sauce that was carefully covered in tabasco. When he did that, a burning, hot spiciness was added to the sourness of the marmette and the flavor of the meat. Adding too much tabasco and you would end up in the awkward situation of having teary eyes, but adding a little tightened up the flavor.

Next, he took the finely grated cheese and softly covered it. The flavor of the cheese matched well with marmette when it was added to the meat sauce as well, but add too much and its texture would become powdery and the flavor of the cheese would overpower everything. After carefully adjusting the volume of the seasonings, he took his fork which was enveloped in meat sauce and brought it to his mouth.

(Umu. As I thought, I should have my company sell this... wait, I forgot I'm already retired.)

The red meat sauce along with its new spiciness and sourness and finally with the addition of the flavor of cheese gave birth to a new flavor that was different from before that made Thomas deeply satisfied. At that flavor, he forgot he was retired and let out a bitter laugh at that, and as a customer, enjoyed his meat sauce.

"Hello! You're open now right!?"

From behind him, a hasty customer opened the door with a ring and asked this.

After that, the two of them finished one plate of meat sauce, and after enjoying their coffee, they left the restaurant. With a slam, the door closed... and disappeared. Thomas and Sirius had both returned to the gloomy wheat storehouse.

"Grandfather..."

Sirius, while still dumbfounded, let out that word. When the door disappeared, he thought it was as though it were a dream. But the heavy bag filled with ingredients was gone and replaced by a bag in his hand filled with coins. On his tongue, he could certainly remember the taste of meat sauce. It was not a dream but reality. At the truth, Sirius laughed at the words he said.

"You can only go to that restaurant once every seven days.... The next time is in seven days."

As if enjoying his grandson's reaction, Thomas informed him of this.

“I’ll go to that restaurant once every four times. For the rest of the days, you can go if you want.”

He had decided to retire and become a ‘customer.’

“Are you sure?”

At the meaning of those words, Sirius licked some of the little meat sauce on his lips without knowing and asked his grandfather this.

“Aah, its fine. If I went as a regular customer and not a merchant, the owner wouldn’t make an unpleasant face either.”

As a perceptive old man, he nodded his head reluctantly. His merchant’s instincts told him that it would be better to leave it in the hands of his grandson who overflowing with ambition than for him who had a short time left.

“Thank you very much, grandfather. I see. I wonder what I should eat next...”

He looked at his grandson, who would no doubt go again in seven days, with narrow eyes. He thought whether his grandson would fulfill his own goal and ‘revive’ the other half of the many noodle dishes in the restaurant and discover the ways to make them.

Translator's notes:

*Togaran is what those on the other side call peppers.

**Marmette is what those on the other side call tomatoes.

CHAPTER 7

OMELETTE RICE

A warm marshland spread out south of the Eastern Continent. In that place, there lived monsters called lizardmen. Their appearance was halfway between a lizard and a human with a very robust body, and they have the characteristic of being able to wrap themselves with water using magic. The lizardmen have used the swamp as their domain since ancient times and have continued to live there using only the giant lizards, crocodiles, birds, and fish living there as their nourishment.

And finally, one of the lizardmen living in that swamp, a proud hero of the blue-tailed clan, Gaganpo was, for the sake of going on a special day that came once every seven days, cleansing his body that was dirty after hunting.

He washed his body with the pure waters of the washing area that was made close to the side of the community. Moving through the mud while carrying their handmade stone axes and stone spears, the lizardmen's bodies, which excelled at bringing down prey before they could sense that something had happened, were usually covered in large amounts of mud. Today like always, he was filthy from taking down a large crocodile. Using the spring water coming from the washing area, he cleaned his body.

As the mud fell to the ground, Gaganpo's body was revealed. Gaganpo, as if to see if his body was clean and to warm up his body from the cold bathing water, spread his large body to the sun and took in the sun's rays.

What the sun shone on was a body that was one head taller than normal lizardmen with well-trained muscles. Able to repel a blow from a dull human's iron sword, his skin was covered with green scales with a touch of blue and scars here and there. It had been eight years since he had hatched out from an egg, and Gaganpo, whose body was in the middle of its prime and filled with the combat knowledge and youthfulness akin to all lizardmen, was a man of valor who had faced many perils and survived, and to him, these scars were an important symbol of that.

After cleaning his body with spring water, he wiped down his body with a towel weaved from plants that were grown under the water. When he looked and saw that

his scales reflected light and slightly glistened, he was satisfied and went to go armor himself. His armor, which was just washed and dried, was made from the hide of a hydra that was brought down by the tribesmen that he himself had led. He put on the simply made armor which was sturdier than the armor worn by the high-grade human warriors known as 'knights.' He didn't bring along his favorite spear that was fixed with polished black rock. Long before Gaganpo was even born into this world, there was an oath that in the cathouse's next world, weapons and fighting were prohibited.

"This should do it."

Looking at the reflection casted off from the surface of the water as the ripples died down, he cleared his throat and nodded. The preparations for going to the cathouse's other world were taken care of. The time was suitable, around the time the sun was directly above him. Gaganpo took in a single breath, and like the animal called a horse that humans often used, he quickly ran to the cathouse's door located in the community's plaza.

At the plaza, there was the elder and head of the community, with a height that was quite shorter than Gaganpo's and tattoo's covering her whole body to show that she was a believer of the deep blue god of water, and the lizardmen in the village who were waiting for Gaganpo's arrival as if it could be at any second. When the tribe's hero came back to the village, they struck their tails to the ground and let out the sound of welcoming. Hearing the reverberating sound of the tails, Gaganpo headed to the very center of the plaza.

"Elder. I have finished preparing."

"Umu. Then set forth, hero."

The female elder, who had a long life of twenty years when compared to lizardmen and was almost three times Gaganpo's life, gravely nodded and urged Gaganpo.

"Gaganpo! Bring these the silver rocks, copper rocks, and plates with you!"

While the children who were about one year of age looked at him with eyes glittering with expectation, they handed Gaganpo a bag filled with round flat silver and copper

rocks, which they received from the human merchant tribes living outside of the marsh by trading crocodile leather, and thoroughly maintained large wooden plates.

“Umu. Thank you.”

Taking those, it was finally time for Gaganpo to head to the other world. He stood at the altar, which was decorated with beautiful stones and flowers that were painstakingly gathered from the wetlands, where the black door would appear.

He had heard that the black door first appeared before the elder was even born. Suddenly, the black door materialized where the altar was today.

At that time, the person who would plunge into that door that led who knows where was the hero of the blue-tailed tribe, Gerupa, who was said to be the strongest. He went over to the other side, had the miraculous encounter with ‘Cathouse’s other world,’ and brought back the wonderful food of the other world.

After that, the black door showed itself once every seven days, and once a year, the community would hold a festival to decide who was the strongest man in the tribe was. It became a custom that the strongest man, as the hero, would head to the cathouse and bring back the other world’s food.

“Well then, I’ll be heading off.”

While taking the hopeful eyes of the female children on his back, Gaganpo opened the door. While hearing the sound of ringing, Gaganpo passed through the door and entered the cathouse’s other world.

“Welcome.”

“Mu. Here.”

The other world’s lord... nodding at the owner’s word, Gaganpo returned the greeting. With the other world’s magic, the lizardmen’s language would be translated into the human language or more precisely the other world’s language. Thanks to that, Gaganpo could talk with the owner even easier than the humans living on his side.

“Omelette rice. Extra large. Omelette, three of them, to go.”

While he lowered his hips into a chair with a flump, Gaganpo handed the wooden plates to the owner and spoke these words like always. The hero who first came to this area heard from the other world's lord about the meaning of the word 'order' which carried the meaning that you wanted the other world's food. After that, Gaganpo and the other lizardmen were able to get the other world's delicacies in exchange for the silver and copper rocks.

"Understood. Please wait for a moment."

Sure enough, the owner nodded, took the wooden plate, and headed to the back of the restaurant.

After that, while waiting for the food, Gaganpo moved only his eyes as he looked at the interior of the restaurant. Since it was just about lunchtime, there were many people inside of the restaurant such as elves with pointed ears, dwarves with their short height and hair growing out from their chins, and finally humans, who were unlike the other two, were sitting in chairs.

They were the same as Gaganpo in that they came to the other world by going through a door and fellow residents of the same world Gaganpo was from. According to the human merchant tribes that the lizardmen traded stones and hides with, outside of the marsh that Gaganpo lived in, there was apparently a wide, wide world spreading out there. To Gaganpo who knew nothing but the marsh where he lived, it was something he couldn't imagine.

But, as he passed through that door, Gaganpo understood the spectacle that door didn't only appear before his people. They also were eating the other world's food as if it was truly the most delicious thing ever. Their origins and race might be all over the place, but their goal was the same. Because it was such a place, there were never any fights that could spill any plates.

"Thank you for waiting. As for your omelettes, I'll hold on to them until you have to go back."

"Mu. Leave it to you."

And then, Gaganpo had finally come face to face with the other world's food. A vivid red line was drawn over the wonderful yellow dish. Coming from the thing called 'omelette rice' was the scent of the drifting smell of fried eggs causing the sound of gulping to ring out in Gaganpo's throat, and Gaganpo excitedly took the sparkling bright spoon into his hand.

"Itadakimasu."

Letting the out a word from his mouth that was a prayer said before eating that was passed down in the other world, he lifted up his spoon. Easily cutting into the eggs that were so soft that it seemed like it might sink upon itself, and from the cut part, he saw plenty of red stuffing. Inside of the dish were tiny grains which made up the orange stuffing that had a trace of red to it. With that, there were emerald green beans which made a vivid contrast. Salted bird's meat. Otherworldly mushrooms and vegetables that were impossible to harvest in the wetlands. All of that was finely minced and turned into one ingredient which was then wrapped up by yellow eggs.

This was the other world's cooking.

While he felt that, Gaganpo brought the spoon which was small to him as a lizardman to his mouth. On top of the spoon were the many ingredients that have become one mass.

"Mu."

Thirty years ago when the when the chosen hero of the village passed through the door, the same delicious flavor from that time when they first tasted it spread out in Gaganpo's mouth. First, what he tasted at the beginning was of course the fried eggs. Just how exactly it was made to be this way was unknown, but it had an exquisite softness that the lizardmen couldn't reproduce no matter how many crocodile eggs they used. It had the flavor of milk and butter, and while having a firm saltiness, it had a slight sweetness to it. And what raised the flavor of the soft, light eggs was the sour red thing covering it. The combination of eggs and this sour, red substance gave birth to a splendid flavor. Just the red substance and the eggs alone would be a treat to behold.

Next, what came was the deliciousness of the stuffing. The chicken's meat which was salted as if to prevent it from spoiling let out meaty juices filled with saltiness as he continued to bite into it, which then coated the thinly cut otherworldly mushrooms' flavor.

The other world's vegetables were finely minced and sautéed which made them take on some sweetness, and the orange-colored grains softly caught that complicated seasoning and wore over itself. Those orange grains took all the flavor of the ingredients and mixed them into one whole flavor.

That flavor made Gaganpo absentmindedly narrow his eyes as he swallowed. Bliss came from one mouthful, but that was not the end. Because there was still plenty of omelette rice left.

Hurriedly, Gaganpo started to move the spoon in his hand. The large plate which was bigger than all the other customers in the restaurant that held the large serving of omelette rice soon faded away.

"Mu. Seconds."

"Coming up."

Before it ran out, he ordered once more of the same thing.

From the first that he tasted it three years ago, Gaganpo had become a prisoner to this flavor like every other hero. Before long, the meal was over and Gaganpo let out a sigh of satisfaction. Having satisfied his stomach, he basked in the silent feeling of joy.

"Gochisousama."

Letting the out a word from his mouth that was a prayer said after eating that was passed down in the other world, Gaganpo waited for the owner to come.

"Okay, thanks for waiting. Three party-sized omelettes to take back, right?"

"Mu. It's here."

As if he was waiting for Gaganpo to finish eating, the owner put the omelettes ready for 'take-out' on the wooden plates that Gaganpo brought with him and put them on top of the table. What was on top of the plate was large serving of the egg dish known as omelettes. A total of three of them were to be brought back as a souvenir to his tribe, and they were lined up and wrapped in a clear, mysterious hide.

"Mu. Payment."

As he saw that and nodded, Gaganpo took the bag that he brought with him and opened it, showing the owner the silver and copper rocks inside. The owner was someone well informed so he took the exact amount of payment from the bag and returned the nod.

"Come again."

At the sign of those words, Gaganpo closed the mouth of the bag and uprighted himself. To Gaganpo and the others, the silver and copper rocks weren't any better than the rocks that they used to make their armaments. Although he thought that, the owner wanted silver and copper rocks more than the fish that they dried to make it last longer, the cutlery made from black rocks, crocodile hide, or 'anything of value,' therefore they exchanged the silver and copper rocks instead.

"Bye."

As he said that, Gaganpo lightly lifted the plates with the food... the plates that the owner could only carry out one serving at a time. There was one plate in this right hand, one in his left. And finally one in his tail. Lightly carrying a total of three plates filled with large, heavy servings of omelettes, he headed to the door in a safe manner.

"Well then, until next time."

"Mu."

While giving a nod to the owner who opened the door for him, Gaganpo headed outside. What he arrived at was the usual altar. Around the altar were the lizardmen waiting for Gaganpo's return... staring closely at the direction of the altar.

“I have returned. The food is as you see.”

Together with his words, he raised the three plates in the air for them to see. As the lizardmen saw that, they simultaneously slapped their tails to the ground and let out a large shout of joy.

Immediately, young women approached Gaganpo and took the plates. They took the plates covered in the transparent hide and lined them in front of the elder, and then they carefully peeled the hide away making sure not to tear it. The moment the hide was peeled away, a gentle fragrance drifted out around the area intoxicating the lizardmen.

To the lizardmen, nothing was more precious than this yellow egg dish. When the lizardmen saw it... with a gulp, they swallowed their saliva.



The elder divided the dish with a finely polished black rock knife. Being equal as much as possible. So that everyone could have a bite.

What spilled out of the first plate of omelettes was a simple stir-fry of thinly minced meat and oranie. The deliciousness of thinly minced meat that was simply seasoned with salt and pepper, the faint sweetness from the oranie, the distinct flavor of the eggs and the red substance made it easy to enjoy the ingredients.

What spilled out of the second plate was a stir-fry of white cheese and smoked meat. The human food that had a unique flavor known as cheese and the smoked meat that was salted after it was smoked were both things with rich flavors that couldn't be tasted in the wetlands. The smoked meat had a flavor that couldn't be found on regular grilled meat, and the way the cheese melted in your mouth gave a wonderful sensation.

Finally, what spilled out of the third plate was white cream with a tinge of sweetness to it and small, pink schripe. The cream had the 'sweetest' flavor out of the three, and the schripe had a tender flavor to it.

While the smell of the three omelettes made them close their eyes, the lizardmen started to worry. In order to share it with everyone, they could only eat one of them. Which one should they eat? It would've been good if they could eat all three. While holding on to that feeling, they waited for the elder to give her permission. And finally.

"You may eat."

Seriously, using her privilege from dividing up the omelettes to go ahead and grab a serving of the cheese omelette, the elder gave her permission, and at the same time, the lizardmen rushed towards the plates as if they were competing to take some of the divided omelettes. Smaller than the palm of their hands, it was only a small amount of omelette. However, this was a delicacy that the lizardmen could only enjoy once out of every seven days, and to the lizardmen born in the blue-tailed tribe, it was a treasure nothing else could compare to.

One of them ate it in one bite, another one ate it little by little to savor the delicacy, closing their eyes in happiness as they slapped their tails to the ground.

However, the one person who did not draw close to the plates and watched from afar was Gaganpo. With the hero's special right, Gaganpo, who could eat his stomach's full of omelette rice, wasn't given any omelettes. At that, Gaganpo was a little disappointed while he thought.

(It's almost the season for the festival.)

While looking at the scene in front of him and thinking about the flavor of the omelette rice from before, Gaganpo thought that. The status of being the hero which also let you eat as much omelette rice as you wished was something very popular. How many young men would aim for that status?

But for now, he had no intention of handing it over. Because Gaganpo still hasn't tasted enough omelette rice.

(Once again, I'll become the hero. And then...)

Next year I'll eat a lot of omelette rice.

The blue-tailed tribe's hero, Gaganpo, while thinking that uncountable times and hardening his resolve, gave one large slam with his tail into the ground.

CHAPTER 8

CHOCOLATE PARFAIT

When Adelheid, the imperial princess of the empire, was a child, she had the experience of eating a cloud.

Adelheid could only faintly remember that moment. After thinking about it, it was around the time that summer was reaching its peak, and Adelheid had left the imperial capital to go to her summer villa.

If she wasn't mistaken, that year, the emperor, her father, and the empress, her mother, did not participate in the yearly custom of heading to the summer villa. After, she heard from her history teacher that during that year the emperor was in the middle of preparing for a war that would swallow up a neighboring country, and to her father, who given the seat as the second-generation emperor by her grandfather, the previous emperor, around the time that Adelheid was born, it was the first chance for him to show off his power. With the chance to gain a port that the empire did not have at the time, he poured his heart and soul into the war, and it was impossible for him to be at the villa.

Also, at that time, her mother was carrying her younger brother in her stomach and could not move from the imperial capital's inner palace, and her playmate, who she knew since she was young, also served as an official aide and remained at the imperial capital since they could not go all the way to the villa.

And like that, the four-year-old Adelheid, all by herself, was left at the villa that was quite the distance away from the imperial capital. Being surrounded by a large number of servants and her grandfather, her daily life at the cool, relaxing villa was comfortable, but it was also a very lonesome place for the young Adelheid. She longed for the imperial capital, and she recalled herself crying at that time. It was at that time.

Her grandfather... who spent fifty years raising up the empire that was like a small country that was abandoned by its vassal states into the empire it was today, her grandfather that gave up the throne took Adelheid's hand and led her to a 'secret room.'

Her grandfather who order the construction of the villa that would be his dwelling after he left the throne knew more about it than anyone else. That grandfather led her to an absolute secret, this room.

—Listen well Adelheid. Everything about this place is a secret to everyone. Because I would lose some of my share.

The entrance to the secret room... In front of a black oaken door with the picture of a cat drawn on it, her grandfather smiled at her, and with his large hand, he patted her and said that. She remembered that his hand was wrinkled and pleasantly cool. After that, with his cool hand, her grandfather pulled Adelheid's hand and opened the door. The bell attached to the door let out a beautiful sound as the door opened, and just like that, Adelheid entered the secret room.

As to what kind of place the secret room was... she couldn't remember the specifics. But she believed that there were a lot of tables and chairs, and it was very bright.

Her grandfather talked about something with the old man who was in that room. It was something that was difficult to understand, and the young Adelheid couldn't understand it at all.

—Oh, sorry there, young lady. Something like this old man's gossip must be boring to you. That's right, I should get something sweet for you, young lady.

The old man, who noticed Adelheid with good manners sitting patiently in a chair looking bored, smiled at her and said this to the man near him.

—Hey! You stupid grandson! If I remember correctly, when you were in college, you said something about you and some cake shop's son did some part-time work in a tea house's kitchen right? You know... that, can you make that? Just in case, we have the glasses for them but I'm not cut out for that kind of stuff.

—Stupid is uncalled for, grandpa! To begin with I don't know what that is... Aah. I got it. I see what you mean.

As if he understood with just that, the man nodded... and for bit, she waited for that.

—Thanks for waiting. This is that old man's treat. Don't worry about it and have some.

As to what it was, Adelheid didn't know. Only, she thought it was a waste to eat something so pretty, and she vividly remembered that feeling disappeared with one bite. When she first ate it, it was pure white with some black in the middle and it was soft and fluffy and sweet and cold... anyway, all she could remember that it was that was more delicious than anything ever ate.

—Good for you. Adelheid.

Without thinking, she forgot herself and immodestly let her mouth become sticky as she ate with everything she had, and while Adelheid felt this food that was different in some way, her grandfather patted her.

—Grandfather! This, what is it!?

She faintly remembered asking that. And at that time, her grandfather laughed as though he were slightly troubled and answered.

—That's is... ah~un... it's that. It's a cloud.

—This is a cloud?

—That's right. Filled with plenty of snow, a winter cloud. It's cold and delicious, right?

—Right!

Now that she was thinking about it, Adelheid remembered that day was the first time she laughed during that year's summer.... And that was memory of the day that 'clouds' became Adelheid's favorite food.

Of course, Adelheid who was sixteen-years-old this year knew. That was probably a dream or something of that nature.

Adelheid's grandfather, who was the first emperor of the great empire that brought glory to the eastern continent, Wilhelm had passed away during that year's winter. Inside of a private room in the villa, he passed away with a satisfied smile. The young Adelheid still didn't fully understand what death was, but she remembered that she

cried sorrowfully when she heard that she couldn't meet her grandfather anymore. Her grandfather, the only one who knew about the 'clouds,' could no longer prove if Adelheid's memories were correct.

After that, Adelheid, as the elder sister of the crown prince that was born shortly before the death of her grandfather, lived as a member of royalty without inconveniences... And a short time before her sixteenth birthday, she caught a lung disease that wasn't common for young people and was sent to the villa that no longer had a master to recuperate.

"Well then, your imperial highness... Make sure to take care of yourself."

"Of course. I'll be fi... Goho! Goho!"

To welcome Adelheid, a bedroom that could match the luxuries of a private room in the imperial capital was prepared... When she was led to bedroom in the villa that was used the most by late emperor, Adelheid let out a sigh, and she started to have a coughing fit.

"Are, are you alright, your imperial highness!?"

"I'm fine. I am just a bit tired from the journey here. Please don't worry so much."

The person who started to panic and rushed over to Adelheid when she did that was the personal attendant assigned by her father to compliment her treatment. Adelheid held back the personal attendant who was a lower priest of the god of earth and was wearing a copper holy symbol that would be used to handle the healing techniques that would stop Adelheid's fits, and she explained that it wasn't something that grave.

"I see, that's a relief..."

While saying that, the attendant took one step back from Adelheid to increase the distance between them, which hurt her a little.

(Isn't that a bit heartless? I'm not sick because I wanted to be.)

She understood the reasoning. Never mind the apprentice priest in front of her, an upper priest wearing a silver holy symbol or even a high priest wearing a golden holy

symbol using healing magic wouldn't be able to heal this disease that could only be healed by recuperation for a few number of years, which is why it was called the 'commoner killer.' Luckily, it could rarely be passed on, but there was still a feeling of fear whether if you were royalty, a commonor, or not. But she couldn't put up with it anymore.

Only just one month ago, she was healthily living in the imperial capital admiring butterflies and flowers, but now that she was sick, separated from her family in the imperial capital, and supposed to live in a villa without any acquaintances, she felt even worse.

(At the worst, I must live here for two years...)

Once again, thinking about the meaning of that, Adelheid began to shake.

This villa, which was rarely used after Wilhelm passed away, had only enough servants that could be counted since long ago. Of course, there were some new hires to welcome Adelheid this time, but they were people from the city who came to put the land around the villa in order. Right now, this place was the exact opposite of the gorgeous imperial court. Here, Adelheid would, by herself, have to peacefully live here like a decorative plant until the day her illness is cured. From now on, it would be a depressing story.

"Well then, if you ever need anything, please call upon me..."

Saying just that, the personal attendant softly left the room as if to give his master, Adelheid, time to peacefully rest.

"Uu..."

After the attendant left, Adelheid collapsed into the luxurious bed and quietly wept. As a single person in regards to her own fate. From today and now on, she had nothing she could enjoy in this room which was like an extravagant prison, and her quiet, gloomy days would begin... right, Adelheid thought that would happen.

What led Adelheid's lifestyle changing came in just three days since then. That day, a gentle wind flowed over to Adelheid, who was killing time by reading books by herself.

Seeing as it might be harmful to her ill body, she saw that the window was still closed regardless of that. Wondering what was going on, when Adelheid turned to the direction of the wind, her eyes widened.

(Eh? Was there supposed to be there over there?)

Thinking it to be her eyes playing tricks on her, Adelheid rubbed her eyes and confirmed once again that the door was still there. She had been living there for three days yet she had not noticed it in the slightest... no, she was sure that it didn't exist yesterday, that black door with the picture of a cat drawn on it. Although it was obvious that it had a different quality than the surrounding walls, it was stuck on the bedroom's wall.

(What is it, I wonder? I feel like I've seen it before...)

Standing in front of that door and while stroking the door's glossy surface, Adelheid looked at it inquisitively. It was something mysterious, but Adelheid recognized that door. She couldn't remember where she saw it, but she certainly had a feeling that she saw it in the past. With a gulp, she swallowed the saliva that started to accumulate in her mouth, and then Adelheid raised her hand to the door.

(Where exactly does it lead to, I wonder?)

Normally thinking, it would lead to a neighboring room, but in this room that used to be Wilhelm's bedroom, there were no neighboring rooms. In that case, where exactly does this room lead? She did not know, but for some reason, Adelheid's heart started to become anxious. Maybe it had something that could distract her from this boredom, and so she started to hope for the 'something' on the other side. That's right, Adelheid unconsciously had hope. While she still couldn't remember what was on the other side.

As the ringing of a bell sounded out, the door opened.

"Oh, welco... un?"

Looking at middle-aged man who was wearing finely tailored clothes and a waistcloth that were not gaudy but finely stitched, Adelheid tilted her head.

“Um... Sorry. Where exactly is this place?”

There were small tables and chairs lined up in a row. Even though there were no windows, the room was bright as though it was daytime. This was obviously different than the villa. But she faintly recognized this place. While she was bewildered by this feeling, Adelheid asked this to the inhabitant of this room.

“A, aah. This is a restaurant called the ‘Cathouse.’ ‘People on the other side’ like you, young lady, say Other World Dining Hall... Aah.”

Meanwhile, the owner was supposed to be meeting her for the first time, but at last, he remembered the truth about this customer that he certainly recognized.

“I remember. Young lady, aren’t you cro... Mister Wilhelm’s grandchild?”

Because she was a customer that was younger than the high school students that were close to the Other World Dining Hall, not to mention a very young girl that was a resident of the other world which rarely came, he remembered her. It’s been around ten years since the regular that was an old man brought along his granddaughter. Time moved on, and she had become extremely beautiful but there was certainly a resemblance. That time as well, she was making such a strange face.

“Oh, my! Are you an acquaintance of grandfather!?”

At those words, Adelheid opened her eyes. As a rule, it was natural that the empire’s subjects knew her grandfather, the great, wise emperor, Wilhelm’s face and name, but in reality, his acquaintances were few. Not to mention someone who called Wilhelm the emperor who managed the empire ‘Mister,’ the people who Wilhelm recognized as family or friends were only a small handful.

Who exactly was this man who could do that?

“Well, yes. We had the pleasure of him being quite partial to us, in a lot of ways.... How about it? Today, I’ll let you have it on the house, so why don’t you try some of our cooking?”

It had been over ten years since he inherited the restaurant, and with the owner seeing a nostalgic face that he would’ve forgotten if they had never met again, he said these kind words to Adelheid.

Now that he thought about it, the previous owner’s croquettes were a favorite of that old man, and the old man never actually ate his cooking. In that case, it would be fine if he at least he could feed this girl who was his grandchild in his place. That is what he thought.

“Cooking... Ah.”

Meanwhile, Adelheid also, at the moment that she heard the owner’s words, suddenly remembered. The sweet memory over ten years ago around the time when her grandfather was still alive. That’s right, here she...

“In that case... that... could I eat a ‘cloud?’”

Ate something very delicious.

“Cloud?... Aah, now that you mention it.”

At that word, he remembered the last time this girl came to the restaurant, and he nodded. The owner once again remembered. Over ten years ago, the dish that he brought out to that adorable customer.

“Understood. Please wait a moment. I’ll bring it out right away.”

Saying that, the owner went back to the kitchen and started to prepare it. During the time of the previous owner, who didn’t have any decent confectionaries when he was young and had a hard time making them, there was a hidden menu filled with all kinds of dishes that would later be listed under the ‘dessert’ menu during his reign.

After a little while, at last, the owner brought out Adelheid’s ‘cloud.’

“Thank you for waiting. The cloud you ordered... Your ‘chocolate parfait.’”

Gently, he placed it in front of Adelheid.

“Oh my...”

That appearance... that gorgeous appearance that was unlike food caused Adelheid to leak out those words.

“Well then, enjoy.”

The owner gave a single call to Adelheid who gazed upon the parfait as though she was entranced before he headed to the back of the restaurant. And so, all that was left at the Other World Dining Hall’s table was only Adelheid and her chocolate parfait.

(Rather than food, it’s more like a brilliant craftwork.)

When she first ate it, she only found it extremely beautiful because she was young. That was what she thought, but this cloud... this chocolate parfait was still too brilliant to be considered food. First, the vessel holding it was extremely clear, a transparent cup. Its shape was made perfectly without a single piece of unevenness, and the way the vessel’s rim rippled out like a flower was beautiful.

And the things that it were decorating did not lose in terms of beauty. The first thing that came into view was the mountain of clouds that was as white as the snowy mountains that could be seen from the northern part of the imperial capital. Covering the top of the sharp, pin-like peak of the cloud was something black which gently flowed like a river drawing out a graceful pattern.

Furthermore, on top of that were brilliant colorful beads scattered all over it, complementing the black and white color scheme. At the edge of the mountain were multicolored fruits and baked sweets. One side of the well-baked, light brown sweets was painted in the same black-colored stuff that the mountain was, and that contrast was lovely.

And then there pure-colored fruits such as red berries that were cut in half and sliced green fruits that had black grains dispersed inside of them which were used to

decorate the base of the mountain with their bright colors. The bottom... the base of the mountain was white and brown and then a layer of light brown. The fact that the transparent glass allowed her to see those three beautiful layers was also enjoyable.

Being face with such brilliant dish with such a varied palette of colors was rare even for Adelheid, who was an imperial princess of the empire who had experienced all the luxuries in the world. To be honest, it was to the degree that it was almost too good to be eaten.

(...It's about time that I should partake.)

Although she thought that, she couldn't just look at it forever. Adelheid kept her silence, took the handle of her long, polished spoon, and started to eat the parfait.

The first thing she ate was the summit of the mountain... the white mountain flowing with black substance. She slipped her spoon into it. The parfait gave no resistance as though it were a cloud when the spoon entered it. A small triangular mountain was piled on the spoon. A sweet fragrance wafted from the mountain covered in black substance, and modestly, she brought it to her mouth.

(...Oh my.)

The feeling of cold metal and the sweet, melting, short-lived flavor that came along with it made Adelheid swallow her breath. It was more short-lived than any food in Adelheid's memory.

(It's sweet... but not sweet at all.)

The sweet substance with a faint bitterness to it quickly melted and disappeared over her tongue when she bit into it. What was left on her tongue after a mixture of sweetness that had a unique fragrance to it and bitterness was the rich flavor of milk and sweetness. At that flavor, along with a favorable impression, Adelheid held a seed of contradiction. The chocolate parfait was sweet but absolutely not too sweet, and to Adelheid, it had an unknown flavor to it.

When Adelheid was in the empire, the 'extravagant confectionaries' that she normally tasted were generally sweet. The things called confectionaries normally used high-

priced sugar to a high degree to give it a luxuriously good flavor, and any country in the eastern continent where sugar was a valuable commodity thought that same. It was the same for the empire, and therefore, the sweets that Adelheid, who could be literally be counted as the number one most high-class woman in the empire, were terrifyingly sweet.

(But, there's no doubt that it's more delicious this way!)

Adelheid, who normally felt that the confections given to her were too sweet to her liking, became engrossed more than she usually would and started to steadily eat spoonful by spoonful. In the blink of an eye, the silver spoon cut into the mountain and carried it to Adelheid's tongue. Its white and black mixed, and as the chocolate parfait decorated with fruit melted on her tongue, Adelheid relaxed her cheeks and absentmindedly closed her eyes. She thoroughly felt that the chocolate parfait had a flavor that wasn't sweet to hold back the sweetness. The white that had the flavor of milk and the bitter black that accentuated it. These melted and disappeared in her mouth and what was left was a dream-like flavor.

(The sweet tartness of the fruit is also extremely good!)

She scooped and raised up the red and green fruits that were cut to be bite-sized on her spoon. The beautiful hue of these two kinds of fruits meant that they were used while they weren't that ripe. The sweetness was there, but the fruits were also filled with a firm tartness to them. But that allowed her tongue that was used to the sweetness to rest, and in turn, it complimented the sweetness and deliciousness of the white and black cloud.

(These baked sweets and fruits too...)

The baked sweets couldn't be scooped by the spoon, so while being aware that it was improper, she pinched it with her two slender fingers and bit into it. The baked confectionary that was dyed black and brown and coated in the white substance had a suppressed sweetness to it as expected and had a crisp savoriness to it. The last thing, the pure-colored fruits were unlike the cloud in that their sweetness had a fruitiness to it.

(Just exactly how many flavors are... Kyaa!?)

While staying silent, Adelheid enjoyed the symphony of countless sweet flavors spreading in her mouth when she then unintentionally raised her voice. The white substance that she had been eating had... suddenly turned as cold as snow.

(This is... something different than what was on top!?)

An unexpected surprise attack. Hidden beneath the soft clouds was something that looked similar to it, but as though it was different, a snowy cloud filled with the coldness of winter. It was smooth, lasted longer in her mouth than the clouds on top, and cold as snow.

(...A confection such as this exists!?)

The short-lived cloud that melted on Adelheid's warm tongue was as smooth as silk and spread sweetness in her. At the palace, she once had a confection made from magically conjured ice that was finely broken up and filled with a mountain of honey and sugar and covered in fruit juices, but this had a flavor of different quality. To Adelheid, this was her second experience in a lifetime.

(A cloud filled with plenty of snow, a winter cloud... also)

While remembering her grandfather's words, she continued to eat, and before long, she dug it up. A round lump with the color of the earth. Although at first glance it hardly had the appearance of a confectionary, Adelheid brought it to her mouth without hesitation.

(Sweet and bitter. This is the flavor of chocolate... un, this is something nice as well.)

Harder than the cloud above, it suppressed its own sweetness. Holding the same flavor as the black substance above, it was cold, brown, rock-like confectionary. It held a stiffness and bitterness to it that soaked into her tongue which thoroughly enjoyed plenty of soft sweetness, and made her feel pleasant.

(...Aah, and this is the end isn't it?)

Finally, while eating the savory wheat-flavored baked confectionary which was not sweet itself but had absorbed the sweetness of the round mass and white snowy

clouds above it, Adelheid remembered her loneliness. The fact that this magnificent orchestra of flavors signaled the end was truly disappointing.

But that time had ruthlessly come. After finishing up the last piece of the baked sweet, Adelheid put down her spoon.

“...Fuu.”

Her sigh was filled with a little bit of regret and lot of satisfaction.

(Now that I think about it, it's been a while since I felt this way.)

Feeling this sense of satisfaction, Adelheid naturally smiled... and thinking about it, it was the first time she smiled since she caught her illness. Chocolate parfait had brought back Adelheid's smile two times now.

“It looks like you've cheered up. That's good. That's good.”

Looking at how satisfied Adelheid was, the owner brought a cup filled with black tea on top of pure-white porcelain while laughing.

“Here you go. Hot coffee on the house. It's bitter as is so please add as much sugar and milk to your liking. That blue pot is sugar and the silver one is milk.”

“Yes, thank you.”

Listening to the owner's words, Adelheid, while naturally giving her thanks, received the unknown black tea that was coffee.

(...U. It's bitter and a little hot.)

Because she had no idea what kind of tea it was, Adelheid first brought it to her mouth plain and narrowed her eyebrows from the bitterness. The fragrance wasn't bad, but for her tongue that was chilled from the chocolate parfait, it was a bit too hot and on top of that sour and bitter. As it was, it was a bit too overpowering.

(If I'm right, Mister Owner said to put sugar and milk to my liking... Oh my.)

Adelheid followed the owner's advice and added milk and sugar to her coffee. She took only one serving of sugar to not make it too sweet and plenty of milk. As they mixed, the pitch-black coffee turned into a dark brown color, and its flavor became softer.

(This is something nice as well. It's warming me up.)

The flavor of the milk and the sweetness of the sugar filled the coffee's bitterness and sourness and suited her tastes. Thanks to the milk, the coffee's fragrance cooled down, but in return, it became easier to drink and warmed up her tongue that was chilled by the chocolate parfait. At the flavor of the coffee, Adelheid sighed with a 'hou.' With the satisfaction that came from the chocolate parfait, the sigh carried the relief that came the warmth pushing into her body, and without a hint of sadness, it was a sigh filled with happiness.

"You can come to this restaurant once every seven days, so if you ever feel like it, make sure to come again. Well, next time I'll charge you though."

Seeing that the presence of sadness was gone from Adelheid, the owner said those words to her. Whenever he saw a customer eat something tasty and become happy, he somehow felt happy as well. Even more so if it was a young lady with a long life ahead of her.

"...Yes. I'll come back no matter what."

In regards to that, Adelheid replied with a smile on her face. After raising the hem of her dress as she curtsied, she left the restaurant with a light gait and once again returned to her room in the villa. The room was supposed to be no different than when she left, but now she no longer thought of it as a prison.

(Money... just exactly how many gold coins should I prepare to pay him, I wonder?)

Just exactly how many gold coins were necessary for that wonderful confection? While thinking ahead to the wonderful time that would come in seven days, Adelheid, being at ease that no one could see her, shamelessly rolled around on the bedroom's bed. Whether it was because of her satisfied stomach or because of the mood, she soon became assaulted by drowsiness and peacefully fell asleep just before noon in the bedroom while breathing softly.

It had been a long time since Adelheid had enjoyed a midday nap with a smile on her face and with a dream in her head.

A dream where she would return to the imperial capital and live happily there. While waiting for the time that bliss that would come after seven days.

She did not know. That after seven days, she would be conflicted over which of the various 'parfaits' listed in the menu to choose from. And the various encounters waiting for her there.

CHAPTER 9

CREAM CROQUETTE

In one of the many countless prairies located in a certain small country's remote countryside, there is a small town. During the day of a full moon, in a corner of the open market in that town, a single boy was humming while he cooked.

"Stew~ Stew~ Delicious Stew~"

The boy's height was slightly taller than an adult's waist. He wore no shoes but instead had soft, curly hair growing from the back of his bare feet. That boy continued peeked into the pot that was bubbling from the heat of the fire. At first glance, he appeared to be a child but those around him did not react or say anything about that. To make sure that they were all cooked evenly, he put the vegetables and pieces of meat that were cut small enough so that they would cook quickly into a pot so that they could boil gently and cooked together. Boiling everything together gently was the heart of stew. Boiling the ingredients until they were all completely soft and drawing out all the flavor was something that had to be done, and he couldn't be negligent in diligently getting rid of the scum.

"Alright! Scum cleaning complete! Stewing is also... Okay!"

After a short period of throwing the scum to the ground, he took a taste test to see if the meat and vegetables were soft, the boy raised his voice.

"Pakke! Is the sauce done?"

"Of course! Here, Pikke!"

At those words, carrying a large pot that required both hands while she pitter-pattered as she drew close was, as expected, a barefoot girl that was about the same age... Pakke. She gave the boy who was immersed in cooking, Pikke, a small saucepan filled with plenty of white sauce.

"Allright! All that's left is to put that in and stir it in with some milk..."

He added the sauce and freshly-squeezed milk that they had bought into the pot and closed it with a lid. And like that, they would stew together until the sauce familiarized itself...

“Knight’s stew is ready! Nn~, smells good!”

He took off the lid. The smell of warm stew softly spilled out around him and the people walking around the market stopped their feet.

“Here! Have some, Pakke! Yep! Tasty as always!”

“Thanks, Pikke! Nn~! Delicious~!”

The two of them had a sample of a cup’s worth of stew in their wooden bowls, and afterwards, they took each other’s hands and began to dance in joy from its overwhelming deliciousness. Their steps were nimble. Their movements were befitting of their race... ‘Halflings.’

Halflings were a race that had the same height of a human child and soft curly hair growing from the back of their feet. Their nature was brimming with curiosity and they liked busy places without a shred of calmness. They also had a culture that made it so they did not stay in a one place for long.

When they became adults, they would leave their families and wander on a journey here and there, and in time, they would become acquainted with the opposite sex and become married with the halfling that suited them. After that, they would continue to travel while making kids and wandering here and there together with their newly born child until their child would become an adult. Then they would see their child off and continue to wander as a couple until the day they would die.

Because they were such a race, halfling parents normally would pass on one technique to earn provisions for their wandering lifestyle to their child as a family inheritance. The things that they inherited were things like bard songs, things like interesting and strange street performances, things like thief techniques to borrow things without permission from people walking down the road, things like techniques to freely use traps to hunt due to their small build which made pulling a bow or swinging a sword

too weak for them to live as a hunter, or things such as techniques to see through sold goods to peddle them. All of these varied from family to family.

And Pikke and Pakke. The technique that this pair of young husband and wife had was the ability to 'cook.' Generally, halfling cooks did not own their own restaurants and aimlessly stopped at a town's marketplace to prepare their ingredients and sell their dishes to passing customers. Herbs that they could find in forests or on the roadside were fine but spices, sugar, and other stupidly expensive seasonings were things that they couldn't get a hold of since they didn't have the money, and since there weren't many rare ingredients that they could use, all they could rely on was their own knowledge of food preparation and their own skill. It was that kind of craft.

And Pikke and Pakke had one secret recipe that they were taught by their parents to support them on their journey. Invented twenty years ago by a merchant in a 'kingdom' which was the most prosperous country in the eastern continent and quite the distance away from this small country, its revolutionary good flavor caused the sauce, which used cow's milk and wheat, to be granted the title of 'knight' at the time by the crown prince, who is now the current king.

In the kingdom where it first appeared, it was now spread to the point that modest farming villages would bring it out as a delicacy on the day of festivals, but in this remote country, it was only spread to the point that only the king could eat it. Because of that, the stew that Pikka and Pakke made was immensely popular.

"Come, come, everyone! A stew that uses the knight sauce, a specialty of the far, faaaar kingdom! Victory comes to the fast!"

"One bowl is two copper coins! It's delicious! Once we sell out, there's no more for today!"



In front of the finished stew, the two of them raised their voices. They swallowed their saliva while a savory, sweet smell overflowed from the knight sauce.

The sound of their loud voices and the aromatic smell of the stew lured in the customers in the marketplace as the sounds of their many footsteps came as they gathered.

“Hey. What exactly is this white stew?”

From that crowd of people, a single middle-aged man acted as their representative and called out to Pikke.

“Welcome, customer! This here is a stew that uses the knight sauce which was born in a faraway country! How about it? Want to have a bowl to taste?”

“You look like a good man, brother, so as the first customer, we’ll give you a big serving as a service! Right? Right?”

With cheerful laughter, Pikke and Pakke encouraged the man as though they were sweeping him up in a stream.

“Well, if it’s like that... I’ll take a bowl.”

As if being overwhelmed by their vigor, the man passed on two copper coins to Pakke.

“Right, here it is! Enjoy!”

“It’s hot so be careful!”

They passed a crudely-made bowl filled with plenty of stew along with a spoon to the man.

“Oh... Ooooooh!?”

Taking that, the man brought the stew to his mouth and slurped as his complexion changed. He raised his voice in surprise because it was a stew that was so delicious unlike the stews he had ever eaten. The bite-sized, dice-shaped, finely-cut, pieces of pork that were still covered in fat melted in his mouth, nearly bringing him to tears.

The baron's fruits, which was filled with the flavor of the stew, were soft and fluffy and broke away as they crumbled in his mouth. The oranie which were well cooked together and stir-fried with butter dissolved away as they gave a sweet flavor, and the orange-colored caryute which carried sweetness were thoroughly cooked and soft. And finally, the soup made from milk and butter had a faint, sweet yet luxurious taste to it. This stew had a flavor that the stew that this man usually prepared using only salt as a seasoning couldn't compare too.

Eating this in the current cold weather, or even piping hot weather which would be the most unfavorable condition to eat this stew, he could feel that this was something that could be considered a delicacy.

"This here's delicious! Give me one more bowl!"

Without even thinking, the man pushed the now empty bowl along with some copper coins on to Pikke as he said that.

"Thanks for the business! Eat more and more!"

"You see this stew here~, if you eat it with bread, it's tasty too! You take some bread and put it in the bowl like this, and then you eat it when it soaks up all the stew! And when you do that, the bread because soft, and when you bite it, plenty of the soaked-up stew gushes out into your mouth!"

While she began serving up stew, Pakke said that cheerfully. Occasionally she would glance over to the stall next to them that was selling black bread. Coming from the crowd of people, the sound of several people swallowing their saliva could be heard.

"Hey, give some over here!" "I want a bowl too!" "Hey, hand some over to me!" "Come, come, buy, buy! Delicious black bread! Eating with the stew over there is perfection!" "Give me seconds! One more bowl!"

And so, people from the crowd turned into customers as they ordered stew one by one. Then the customers who managed to get ahold of some stew went over to the next stall and bought small pieces of black bread cut into individual servings and ate it with the stew. Sighs could be heard here and there, and a number of customers once again presented their wooden bowls as they asked for seconds.

“Come, come! Victory comes to the fast! We only made this much for today!”

“It’s over when there’s no more! Eat as much as you can!”

Just like that, the stew was sold out before noon, and Pikke and Pakke managed to obtain enough funds to travel to the next city.

Early afternoon.

“Today is a~ fuuun~ Satur’s Day~”

“Yay!”

Pikke and Pakke deposited their luggage at the inn, and while singing an out of tune song, they lightly ran to the middle of the forest outside of the town. Sometimes they would hear the sounds of some beast wriggling about, but the two of them paid that no mind. Wild beasts were cowardly by nature and by making a ruckus like this, they wouldn’t attack, and even if they did, there were no beasts that could catch a halfling that was seriously running away.

“What should we eat today?”

“Leeet me think... Since there’s no more stew left for today, maybe a knight sauce dish!”

“That’s right! Let’s get that! We have plenty of money too!”

The two of them cheerfully talked. Today was a good day. The nearby stall selling black bread also sold out just like them and gave their thanks, and because of that, they had some unexpected income. Also, the first customer who ate their cooking, the man who owned the town’s inn, offered them 115 silver coins and 7 copper coins to teach him how to make knight sauce. Because of that, they had plenty of money.

It was the perfect weather for the Other World Dining Hall.

“Just a little bit more! It’s in the opening just ahead!”

As Pakke said that cheerfully, in the wrinkled parchment Pikke was holding on to were countless scribbles along with many countless spots of cat marks written down. Right, this was a secret known among the halflings... a mark showing where the 'Cathouse's door' would appear.

The halfling's map was a bit special. In any case, since all members of the race were fueled by curiosity and whimsy and since they were a race that traveled and scattered here and there, every one of them had a land that they were familiar. Because of that, whenever fellow halflings met, they would take out their maps and teach each other what they knew. Without reluctance or secrecy. Since they are a race that goes from journey to journey, everyone knew that it was very important that they knew about the lands that they might come across from here on. And amongst the halflings was the well-known 'Cathouse's door.'

You could visit it once every seven days on a Satur's day. On this day, black doors with cats drawn on them would appear throughout this world. These doors would lead to the 'Cathouse,' an otherworldly restaurant, and there, you could eat the other world's cooking.

The other world's cooking was extremely different but very delicious. That's why when it's about Satur's day and you're close to a door, you should have a meal there. You will definitely be able to eat some extremely delicious cooking, is what they say.

At any rate, the two of them were halflings studying the art of cooking. Holding an interest in all things cooking would make them twice as better, and being glutton out of the gluttonous halflings would make them ever better at cooking.

The two of them also visited the Other World Dining Hall many times during the time they were traveling with their families. The Other World Dining Hall's food was extremely different and extremely delicious. Because of that, whenever there was some excess in their purse and if a door was close, they would head to the Other World Dining hall without fail on Satur's day.

"We maaade it~! Alright, it's there!"

"Other people... un! Not here!"

After going off of the animal trail and into the heart of the forest to safely discover a lightly floating black door, they looked around restlessly as they surveyed the area to see if there were any other people close to them. You could only use the Cathouse's door once per day, and it was reasonable to think that the residents living in the area would have a 'monopoly' on it. Among the halflings, there were famous stories about how if an outsider tried to use the door at the lizardmen's altar, without a doubt, crowds of lizardmen would attack. There was also no doubt that they would be burned into nothing the moment that they would try to use the door of 'Midnight Lady,' who would appear at the restaurant late at night wearing a pure red dress and would eat the most expensive thing on the menu which was beef stew.

Because of such circumstances, it was manners among the halflings to search around the cathouse's door whenever they were planning to use it, and it was also an ironclad rule.

"...Un. It looks like it hasn't been used in some time."

"Then, let's go."

"Un. Let's go, let's go!"

After investigating the area and seeing that there were no signs of any living creature that could open the door approaching, the two of them held hands, and Pakke opened the door. The sound of a bell rang out.

"Welcome. Oh, aren't you Pikke and Pakke, right? It's been a while."

As he went to meet countless customers in the clamorous, congested restaurant and saw Pikke and Pakke, the owner said that.

"That's right! How long ago was last time?"

"Let me see... I think it was when summer was ending!"

The two of them were used to this as they gave cheerful replies. The little people... Because halflings never stayed in one place, there were no 'regulars' among them who could visit the Other Worldly Dining Hall every week. Halfling could only visit if they

were close to a door on Saturday by chance, and while halflings themselves came in good number, they were rarely the same individuals.

“Never mind that, Mister! First bring us a menu!”

“And what’s today’s special?”

“Right, right. Please wait just a moment. And today’s special is cream croquettes.”

While bitterly laughing at the two’s always high spirits, the owner told them of today’s special.

“Cream croquettes!”

“White sauce with fried bread crumbs!”

It was as if it was god’s will. The two of them looked at each other and laughed with a smile.

“Mister! First give us two portions cream croquettes! I’ll have rice!”

“I’ll have bread! And make sure to bring it with the menu! We’re going to eat a lot today!”

Giving their order before they arrived at their seats, Pikke and Pakke excitedly sat in a chair at random while swinging their legs back and forth.

“Okay, okay. But you little people are cheerful as always.”

The owner gave a bitter laugh at the two of them while heading back to fry up the cream croquettes.

“There’s a bunch of different people today too, Pikke!”

“That’s right! It’s interesting, right Pakke!”

While they waited, Pikke and Pakke, who couldn't bear having free time, looked around the restaurant. Today too, the Other World Dining Hall had many kinds of diverse customers gathered inside of it.

A young woman was savoring her 'minced cutlet' that was covered with plenty of sauce.

A young woman wearing a beautiful dress was blissfully eating a cold 'parfait' that looked so sweet that it would melt.

An elegant man who was said to be the young master of a mercantile house was enthusiastically tasting his 'napolitan' while writing down his impressions.

A lizardman next to him who had an expressionless face that made it so that you couldn't know what he was thinking was moving his spoon in a hurry as he ate his 'omelette rice.'

An elven man who had a magical thin sword hanging from his waist while he ate 'natto spaghetti' which used a sauce made from rotten beans, something even Pikke did not eat.

There was even a table where about one hundred small people about the size of Pikke's palm were all wearing matching clothing as they gathered around and ate a single plate of 'hotcakes.'

Normally you couldn't see these kinds of customers gathered in one place. A place where people came to eat food while overcoming the barriers of race. The Other World Dining Hall was indeed a strange place that was befitting of the Other World.

"Interesting, right Pikke!"

"That's right! Even if we came every day, every day would be interesting, right Pakke!"

While they waited and had that exchange, the owner finally brought out the food.

"Thank you for waiting. Your cream croquettes."

The owner's hands lined up the piping hot dishes. On a plate with sliced raw, leafy vegetables and small red marmette fruits were three piping-hot, brown cream croquettes.

""Ooh~""

The two of them raised their voices in harmony. While holding great expectations for the first dish of the day, they took up their knives and forks. With a crunch, a pleasant sound came out as knives entered croquettes. With a glop, what came out was something red mixed in with the white knight sauce. With a puff, the good smell of the overflowing knight sauce made the two of them twitch their noses. And without reservations, with a bite, what filled and spread in their mouth was the unique rich taste of knight sauce filled with a simple sweetness mixed with the ocean taste of soft meat that was different from fish.

""N~!""

The very similar husband and wife, Pikke and Pakke, raised their voices at the same time while they puffed out hot steam out of their mouths as they swallowed.

"Delicious~!"

"It has the taste of the ocean~!"

They then talked about the flavor of the thing they just ate with one another. Today, the Other World Dining Hall's food was in perfect condition as well.

"Next is... I'll have this one!"

"And I'll have this one!"

Pikke and Pakke, as though they planned it out beforehand, took different cream croquettes in their hands and began to gulp them down. Although they had the differences of man and woman, the two halflings were like twins reflected in a mirror as they stuffed their cheeks with their second cream croquette, and as though they couldn't hold themselves back anymore, they reached out with their hands and tossed rice and bread into their mouths.

The first-class bread and rice went well with the cream croquette's rich flavor and gave birth to a flavor that was different than when they ate it by itself. After the two of them uncharacteristically savored that flavor diligently, they told their trusty partner about the filling.

"This one had smoked meat and mushrooms!"

The cream croquette that Pikke had eaten was filled with smoked meat and mushrooms. The smoked meat that was finely minced, stir-fried, and perfectly seasoned with spices was filled with a moderate amount of fat, a saltiness that wouldn't lose to the knight sauce's sweetness, and the strong taste of meat that came from drying it. The thinly-cut, meaty mushrooms inhaled the flavor of the smoked meat and the knight sauce's sweetness, and every time you chewed it, it added its own flavor to the sauce. The cream croquette sucked the flavor of smoked meat and mushrooms and spread it out inside of his mouth. It was a substantial flavor, and it was a flavor that went well with rice.

"This one has yellow grains! It's sweet!"

On the other side, the cream croquette that Pakke had eaten was filled with yellow vegetable grains. It was something that was not in Pakke's knowledge. The small yellow vegetables were very sweet as though they were fruit. Every time she bit into those grains, they would burst open with a sweet flavor which made the sweetness that the knight sauce had in the beginning to become even stronger, and made the croquette sweet as a confectionary. When eaten together with the bread that was made in this world using butter which gave it a slightly sweet flavor, it made it a very delicious dish.

"I see! Then I'll have this too! Un! It's sweet and delicious!"

"I'll have this! Un! The flavor of the meat is so good!"

Pikke and Pakke took their last cream croquette in hand, and with that they finished eating one plate of cream croquettes.

"Un! That was delicious! Wait, what should we eat next?"

“Leeet me see...”

After that, the two of them put their faces together as they peeked at the menu. The two of them didn’t have nearly enough. The two of them were halflings that were the size of human children, but they had an appetite that was many times that of a human. Their meal had only just begun.

“That was delicious, right Pikke?”

“Un. It’s been a while after all. Maybe we ate too much.”

Around the time that they each had ten servings worth of food and bought a bento for lunch tomorrow, it had become dark around them. As you would expect, both of their stomachs were filled to the brim and they each had faces of satisfaction.

“Let’s go home for today!”

“Un! Let’s go sleep in a fluffy bed!”

While they noisily talked, they hurried down the path to the inn.

“Where should we go next?”

“U~n, maybe it’s because the flavor of the ocean in that cream croquette but I feel like going to the ocean!”

Quickly, they decided their next destination. Always continuing their journey with a halfling-like quickness.

“I see! Then let’s get on a boat from here! I’m already this big and I haven’t got to ride one yet!”

“Ah, me too! That sounds good! Let’s do that!”

Affectionately talking with one another, the two laughing halflings were illuminated by the dazzling light of the full moon in the skies above.

CHAPTER 10

OKONOMIYAKI

In this world there are two continents, the Eastern Continent and the Western Continent.

The continent to the west has plains and forests stretching as far as the eye can see, and unlike the Eastern Continent where the now-ruined great kingdom unified the continent as one, it was a place that had never been unified even once and had a culture that was different in that there was no country but instead many provinces gathered together in one place.

From one of those provinces, which was more than half covered in mountains, Souemon, a royal samurai guard of the mountainous province, had started to visit the Other World Dining Hall about five years ago.

Around that time, Souemon had by chance become intimate with a certain halfling. That traveling small man was traveling here and there all over the Western Continent while composing verses to make a song and receiving small change from people traveling along the roads or villagers who were starved for some small entertainment. Calling himself a minstrel, he was a suspicious and shrewd man who was like a rat.

The two of them got along well, and Souemon welcomed the small man into his estate. It was at that time that the small man quietly told him. In a place that was close to the mountainous province's capital, where the location of a magical door that connected to an otherworldly restaurant. At first he was half-convinced... No, the feelings of doubt were much stronger in him, but Souemon, who had a samurai-like sense of strong duty, decided to visit that place just once on the specified day out of obligation to that small man.

And so, he came across it. The other world's dining hall and wondrous food... and also a customer he couldn't stomach.

The time was evening.

Souemon, who had just entered the Other World Dining Hall like always, heard a jingling sound behind him.

(...Oh great. Is this going to turn into another fight?)

While feeling the wind filled with warm air drifting from the other side of the door and while guessing the true identity of that presence, he let out a single sigh and turned around.

“So it’s you again. Pale-faced onmyouji of the seaside province.”

Just as he thought, what he saw there was a face he was accustomed to. Whether he simply never went outside or he simply never went out into the sun, even though it was natural that all the commoners in the seaside province had pitch-black skin from being roasted in the sun, his face was slender and white to the point that you couldn’t tell his age. Souemon wasn’t fond of dealing with him, this restaurant’s regular customer.

“Well, well. If I’m not mistaken, it’s the mountain monkey who has no talent besides swinging his sword... my apologies, if it isn’t the mountainous province’s Sir Samurai.”

The man who had the personality traits of a fox and ran business of performing rites in the seaside province’s court as an onmyouji, Doushun, narrowed his already narrow eyes even more as he spat poison back at Souemon. A feeling of anger welled up from those words, but he couldn’t draw his sword in the Other World Dining Hall so he relied on his mouth to continue the exchange.

“Hmph! I see you’re an unlikable person as always. For what reason did you decide to come as at the same time as I?”

“That’s my line. I’m busy with my own welfare as an onmyouji of the imperial court. What about you? Since you’re normally in charge of security at the imperial court, you can just come whenever you’d like.”

At Souemon's words, Doushun shrugged his shoulders and returned with words filled with thorns. What flowed between the two of them was a dangerous atmosphere. The customers invited by the 'door' that showed itself in any place sometimes became entangled with 'customers with a bad affinity' for them just like this. Elves and dwarves. Knights and sorcerers. People from the kingdom and people from the empire. Customers such as that.

Souemon and Doushun were the prime examples of such customers.

Facing the sea, the now peaceful seaside province, which had put its power into learning and onmyou in order to make sure that there would be safe travel across the seas so that trade with the east can prosper, and the mountainous province, which was half-covered in mountains and had a long-time strong trait of valuing martial arts in order to protect the populace from ogres and monsters and to clear away the land when necessary, were known to have the most volatile relationship in the continent to the west. On top of valuing extremely different things, they were neighboring provinces that glared at each other side by side. And to finish it all off, their province's power were roughly equal so it was natural that they would bad terms with one another.

For Souemon, it was inconvenient that Doushun also apparently heard from a halfling traveling through the Western Continent about the location of a door in the seaside province, and once out of every seven days, he would usually visit the Other World Dining Hall. To top it off, because of work, the time that the two of them would come was generally the same, during the evening when the sun was just about to set. And so, this was how these two regulars would often come to the restaurant at the same time.

...Even if they didn't get along, if one of them waited for a short time before visiting the problem would be solved, but each of them felt that if they did that they would lose. Therefore, it always turned out this way.

"Welcome. The two of you, please take a seat anywhere you'd like."

"...Umu. I'm in your debt."

"...Understood. I'll trouble you for a bit then."

As they glared at each other, the owner had at some time came out from the back of the restaurant and greeted them. They replied to the owner's words, and going through the various eastern people and different races that they could see in the restaurant's interior, they arrived at the same table. They glared at each other for an instant, but they soon averted their eyes from one another and called for the owner without looking at the menu.

"Owner, I have an order."

"Owner, would it be alright if you could take my order?"

At any rate, the two of them have decided what to order. It's been around five years since they started visiting the restaurant, and they have eaten a variety of things. All of them were delicious and they enjoyed every last one, but in the end, they settled on this.

"Alright. Is your order the same as always?"

The two of them nodded at the owner's question and placed their orders.

"Umu. I'd like okonomiyaki with pork*. With plenty of sauce."

"Yes. I would like okonomiyaki. Seafood. With extra bonito flakes**."

The two of them ordered the dish that they believed would let them savor the alluring Other World seasonings known as 'sauce' and 'bonito flakes' in the best possible way.

"Understood. Please wait just a moment."

The owner raised his voice and then pulled back into the back of the restaurant.

"Hmph. Seafood as always I see. You should be sick of eating things like that that since you're from the seaside province."

"The same goes for you. Wild boar meat isn't uncommon in the mountainous province, right?"

After nitpicking at each other's orders, while drinking this restaurant's famous lemon water, they started to gossip with one another to amuse themselves.

"...Hou. So the seaside province is increasing its trade with the empire?"

"...I see. So a dwarven swordsmith has come."

Of course, it wasn't simple gossip. They were gathering information about each other's country. Information about neighboring provinces. This was something that would become extremely valuable when the time. Even if they didn't get along, to each other, sitting at the same table with each other could prove helpful.

On one hand serving the seaside province's royal court was an onmyouji who operated a business on inner court affairs and had a deep connection to merchants and nobles.

On the other hand was a samurai who managed numerous military achievement in the mountainous province and worked his way to the top into becoming an imperial guard of the emperor while still maintaining a deep connection with the lower classes. The ways of life between these two people were extremely different, but to each other, their talks were something that were very fresh and helpful.

And then, that talk was suddenly interrupted.

"Here you are. Thank you for waiting. Your okonomiyaki."

The owner came while carrying two black metal plates in both of his hands at the same time and placed them in front of them.

"Ooh. So it's finally here."

"Fuu. I got tired of waiting."

With the savory smell coming up from the hot metal plates, Souemon and Doshun unknowingly smiled broadly. The freshly-made okonomiyaki was placed on a hot black metal plate in order for it to not cool and the faint sound of sizzling could be heard from it.

With a mixture of wheat and pale-green cabbage, okonomiyaki had various ingredient such as wild yams and so forth added to it and then cooked. On top of that mixture of pale yellow and green, after being dyed black with plenty of sauce, was white mayonnaise with a shade of yellow which painted the dish in a checkered pattern. At first glance, something that looked like wood shaving taken off by a plane were fluttering and being lifted up by the heat with the faint scent of the ocean wafting off of them while they danced.

And finally, what was lightly covering that, as if dyeing it a different color, was deep green seaweed powder. All of these mixed and added to the vivid color of the okonomiyaki. And the smell. The smell that came from the cooked and scorched sauce that was drizzled on top of the okonomiyaki rose up from the heat of the black metal plate and stimulated Souemon and Doushun's stomachs.

"Umu. Then... itadakimasu."

"Well then... itadakimasu."

No longer able to bear their hunger and taking their chopsticks in hand, Souemon and Doushun had started to eat quickly as possible at the roughly the same time. Fluffy and soft like a brand new cushion, the okonomiyaki were cut up by their chopsticks.

From the cut gaps, the sauce covering it fell on top of the plate and made a faint burnt smell. While enjoying that burnt smell, Souemon raised the okonomiyaki with his chopsticks and stuffed his cheeks.

Hot.

The first thing he felt was the heat. The freshly made okonomiyaki that was placed on the metal plate to keep it warm was hot.

"Well well, as always you have an unrefined way of eating, Sir Samurai of the mountainous province."

While ignoring the words of Doushun who was sitting next to him, he hurriedly puffed out the gathering heat in his mouth out while he chewed.

What spread in his mouth after the heat left his mouth was fragrance and sourness of the scorched sauce.

Once it finally reached the level of heat where he could chew, what he felt in his mouth was the crispy, savory surface of the okonomiyaki and, thanks to the cabbage which helped it trapped plenty of air, the soft, fluffy interior.

And then, various smell and flavors mixed and become one as they filled the inside of his mouth. The smell of the shore came from the seaweed powder. The flavor of the 'bonito flakes' which looked like wood shavings at first glance.

The soft flavor of fatty pork which resembled boar meat but did not have the bad smell that came from wild game.

The savory taste of wheat filled with plenty of oil mixed with the cabbage's sweetness, the abundant flavor of egg, and sometimes occurring spicy taste of something red. And what wrapped them up completely was the sweet, spicy, sour, delicious flavor of sauce, and what wrapped up them gently was flavor of mayonnaise.

What an extravagant flavor it was. To take countless flavors from the mountains and seas at once and make them all into one harmonious flavor. Every time to savor this flavor, Souemon readied himself for the heat as he stuffed it all into his cheeks.

At this restaurant, after ordering many different things on a whim, once he found this dish, he would order and eat it every time, and there were no signs of him getting tired of it.

"You could at least act with a little grace when you eat."

Speaking of Doushun, he was cutting and taking small bite-sized pieces of okonomiyaki, carefully blowing on it to cool it down, and then bringing it to his mouth.

"...Un. Delicious as always. There's no bad smell whatsoever. The cleaning of the bounties of the ocean are perfectly done, but what's really magnificent are the bonito flakes."

While nodding at the flavor of the small pieces of schripe and kraako*** that were puffing about, he let out his impressions. Doushun had a never-fading fascination with bonito flakes, and although he could tell that they were made from fish, he had no idea exactly how they became this shape or this flavor. If by chance someone could solve that mystery so that the seaside province could make it as well, it would no doubt push the seaside province's culinary arts to greater heights.

Thinking that way, Doushun would every time order okonomiyaki with bonito flakes in order to directly taste them himself. Of course, he wouldn't deny that they also taste really good.

And so, after a short time, the two of them finished eating their okonomiyaki...

"Owner, I would like to request seconds!"

"Owner, I would also like another helping."

The two of them gave their orders at the same time.

"Understood. Okonomiyaki, right? What kind of toppings?"

He asked the two of them. Every time, he knew what they would answer.

"...I would like one seafood."

"...I would like pork."

As he thought, the two similar customers averted their eyes as they ordered. When they saw each other eat it so deliciously, they started to feel like eating it as well. It was something that normally happened to people sitting at the same table.

"...Fuu. In the end, we ended up bickering again."

After finishing eating, Souemon, who had returned to the outskirts of town, let out a sigh filled with the scent of sauce. Time and time again, the fact that he came across that unlikable face was something he could call the restaurant's only fault.

"Good grief, if that pale onmyouji wasn't there, it would be such a better restaurant."

Without thinking, he let those words out. As if he were making excuses as to why he felt bickering back and forth felt 'fun.'

"Well, I guess I better keep trying tomorrow as well."

He muttered that as if he were fixing his mood and returned to his daily routine.

Seven days later, while looking forward to the day he could go again.

...And once again, having a feeling that he would run into that man again.

Translator Notes:

*Pork here refers to butatama which literally means pork ball and refers to the type of okonomiyaki.

**Bonito flakes also known as katsuobushi is dried, fermented, and smoked skipjack tuna. It's used for a variety of things like making stock or just as a topping in okonomiyaki. They are also known to dance from being lifted by steam due to their light weight.

***Kraako is what people in the other world call squid.

Souemon speaks in a samurai-like way, ending his sentences in de gozaru and referring to himself as sessha. I left those out because keeping de gozaru in is like keeping the word desu in and doesn't really fit with the style guide I've been keeping for this series. To me, this is one of the things lost in translation such as Doushun saying the word seafood in hiragana instead of katakana, which gives the word a meaning of unfamiliarity. If some of you think that it's really important to keep it in, I might see about putting them in.

CHAPTER 11

POUND CAKE

Saturday morning. After finishing the preparations for beef stew and eating a simple breakfast, the owner relaxed in the kitchen for a little while. It would be fine for him to go back to his home on the third floor for a bit, but every Saturday at around this time, a 'visitor' would come. He waited for a bit.

"Yo. Morning. I brought today's share."

A thin man along with a wagon filled with provisions for the kitchen came out of the elevator that was used to bring in foodstuffs.

"Ah, sorry about this every time."

The owner gave him a greeting in a familiar manner. The man was his friend since elementary school so they very familiar with one another.

"It's fine. I'm gonna come over to the restaurant on weekends anyway so it doesn't really change anything, and I'm getting paid for it."

While saying that, the man went over to the large refrigerator used to store provisions for the kitchen in a familiar manner, took out cakes and sweets that he made himself from the wagon, and crammed them inside.

On the first floor of the three story building where the Cathouse was located, there is a cake shop with a sign that has a puppy with wings called the 'Flying Puppy.' The man inherited the cake shop from his father who was a pastry chef and became the second generation shop manager, and he was also the owner's childhood friend. As a middle-aged man the same age as the owner, he already had two children.

The Flying Puppy's manager knew about the Western Style Cathouse's secret Saturday-only special sale. Around the time the manager went to the same elementary school as the owner, he would receive money from his parents who were too busy to prepare dinner, and he would frequently come over. The previous owner took care of

the manager as though he were his own grandchild, and in time, he came to know about the secret that this restaurant the previous owner managed held.

The manager also had a debt of gratitude. During college, he was in a motorcycle accident. During the time he was paralyzed from the bottom down from the after-effects of the accident, he was saved by the suspicious 'Otherworldly medicine' that the previous owner brought him. (The doctor said that he had made a miraculous recovery. In truth, it was somewhat of a miracle)

Along with that bond, after he studied how to be a patissier, the manager, who inherited the shop where his parents worked in his childhood friend's building, decided to 'cooperate' with the familiar Other World Dining Hall. He made the wholesale merchandise for the weekdays for his shop during Saturday as well.

"Alright, and that's the end. Fuu, as I thought, it's a little tiring when you get to be this age. Ah, that's right. Before I forget, I'll pass this over to you."

After putting the cakes that needed refrigeration into the refrigerator and the cakes that had to be kept at a fixed temperature into fixed-temperature storage cabinet, the manager took a paper box from the wagon and gave it to the owner.

"What's this? Cake?"

The owner tilted his head at the long, thin paper box with the silhouette of the Flying Puppy's trademark puppy with wings. The sturdy paper box that was used for gifts was a little heavier than it looked. What came from it was the faint smell of brandy. It seemed like quite the amount of it was used. There were cakes that used liquor in the cakes that the Flying Puppy put out, but there weren't supposed to be any cakes that gave off the definite smell of liquor like this.

"One of our giveaways. You should know about it too right? If you buy one hundred pieces of cake from the Flying Puppy, we'll give you a whole cake of whatever you'd like."

The manager frankly replied to the owner's question while laughing. It was a giveaway from the stamp system that he had at his store, the Flying Puppy. One piece of cake meant one stamp. If you gathered twenty stamps, you'd get a piece of cake, and if you

gather one hundred stamps, you'd get one whole cake as a present. For the purveying office women in the neighborhood who have a passion for sweets, he had heard that the store's stamp service was very popular.

"One hundred pieces... Don't tell me, is it that person?"

Listening to the manager's answer, it came up in the owner's mind. The face of a single 'regular,' an otherworldly customer in her early twenties that could easily eat one hundred pieces of cake.

"That's right. I told you before right? About there's a cutie who's been coming here every week for about a year who would eat two pieces of my pound cake. Give that to her. There doesn't seem to be any refrigerators over on the other side so just in case, I made it so that it would keep for a few weeks if you store it at a fixed temperature, but make sure to tell her that if you unseal it, that she should eat it as soon as possible."

"Got it. If she comes, I'll hand it over."

At the manager's request, the owner gave a single nod and took it. Thinking about that woman, last week, she had troubled face for some reason. Something bad could have happened. To take her mind off of it, this gift should do some good.

Coming once every seven days, the day of tribulations.

"Aah, so this day has come once again..."

While looking at the black door with a picture of a cat drawn on it which appeared from the corner of the training ground and shaking her attentively-groomed blonde hair and clear, blue eyes, Celestine, the high priestess of the god of light, frowned.

This was a training ground made for high priests. Currently, the only person allowed here was Celestine who was serving as this monastery's director at age of twenty-one due to the personal order of his holiness the pope a year ago after she was recognized as a high priest at the young age of twenty when normally people were recognized at

the age of forty or fifty... Therefore, the only people who knew about this training ground's secret were only the already retired previous director and Celestine.

“Today... today will...”

She purified her body and gently stood in front of the door. Just looking at it made her saliva well up... as she tried to endure it. The ‘one year of enjoyment’ had already ended... at this rate, she would have to recognize her own weakness.

The god of light which she followed honored temperance, self-control, and sought abstinence. And for a priest that should be more pious than an ordinary believer, especially for a high priest that would lead the organization, abstinence after the ‘one year of enjoyment’ would be requested.

The god of light that they followed and the god's faithful servant that was one of the four legendary heroes, his holiness the pope, preached to them. It was easy to withstand that which you did not know. That is because you never thought you wanted it. He wanted to tell them that being triumphant over desire would grant them purer souls. Bearing the knowledge and the allure of various things that would disturb abstinence would be true discipline, is what he said.

What was born from that belief was the custom called the ‘one year of enjoyment.’ Liquor, tobacco, sweets, makeup... Because they valued chastity, sensual pleasures were not allowed, but all the apostles of the god of light, especially those aiming to be high-ranking priests, would have to bathe and indulge in all the various indulgences that existed in this world besides that for only one year out of their whole lifetime. After that, they would have to cut all of them away and carry on their discipline of abstinence.

Of course, there were many that failed this practice. There is a line of thinking that it is necessary to fulfilled abstinence with only one's own will, and people who became high priests could get ahold of as much indulgences as they wanted. Because of that, to sever themselves away from them was difficult, and it was normal for high priests to have in interest in at least one indulgence or other. At any rate, the god of light's highest priest, the pope as one of the four heroes who many decades ago with just four people challenged and defeated the evil god that was trying to remake the monsters in the world, was a tobacco lover who wouldn't let go of his pipe even for a moment.

Having one or two vices was something that was considered human weakness and forgivable by the organization.

Out of all them, Celestine was an existence that emitted conspicuousness. Following the tradition, she bathed herself in various pleasures for one year... and one year and a day after, she cut herself off from all of them two years ago. From there on, she became someone with an iron will who never put even one of those indulgences into her mouth... It is because of that will and aptitude of faith that she was recognized as a high priest, and putting aside her rich one year rebellion, she was the youngest high priest and had earned many achievements. What stood in front of Celestine who was in charge of one of the nun's meeting cloisters was a door.

"...Aah, this won't do..."

Slowly, Celestine rose up and unsteadily approached the door. On the other side of this door was vice. Devilish otherworldly goods that couldn't be obtained in this world. The previous, aged director informed her of this hidden door before he left, and she was fascinated with it for a year... and now that her second 'one year of enjoyment' has passed, Celestine couldn't cut away her attachments to it.

Celestine opened the door frustrated, and with the ring of a bell, the sound of defeat rang out.

"Welcome."

The face of the middle-age owner who greeted the slowly entering Celestine with a bright smile seemed to her like a devil luring her into depravity.

(It's, it's not too late...)

That's right. She could just leave the store and return. She was different from the vulgar people who stuffed their cheeks with this restaurant's dishes as though they were the most delicious things ever. She was a high priest of the great god of light, so she had to bear it! As she was desperately telling herself that, Celestine who was about to turn around was dealt the final blow by the devil... No, the owner.

“Would you like your usual pound cake? Aah, by the way, today’s pound cake is rum raisin.”

Suddenly, Celestine’s feet stopped.

(Ru, rum raisin!?)

Including the first time she visited this restaurant, she had only tasted it three times... a phantom flavor that Celestine have unceasing love for. Out of reflex, her saliva seemed like it might overflow from the revival of the memory of that vivid taste on her tongue.

“Well, how about it?”

“I, I will partake!”

“Understood, welcome back.”

Reflexively answering, Celestine was confronted the owner’s bright smile which was just as if it was the smile of the devil of temptation. While reflecting on her defeat, Celestine sat down in a nearby chair.

(...I ended up losing... I’m such an idiot!)

The faces of the high priests in the organization passed through her mind. They were her seniors who held power befitting of a high priest while dyeing their hands in luxuries that they couldn’t bear to throw away. Celestine who secretly held them in contempt was assaulted disgust for herself. She was sick of hearing about her iron will. To herself, she was no different from any other high priest. Isn’t she just a weak person, is what she thought.

(In, in the first place, this restaurant is also that restaurant! If only if it were the same flavor every week, I would’ve gotten sick of it!)

Right, the ‘pound cake’ that tempted Celestine had a different flavor every week.

At some times, it would be filled with plenty of dried fruits. At other times, it was made with something called ‘chocolate’ that was bitter but very sweet. At other times, it was

something that was bitter and bright green, and it had sweet beans that were cooked in sugar in it. And finally at other times, it had something thick and yellow in the middle of it that had the flavor of eggs... This restaurant's pound cake changed every time she came back. The same flavor would only come out once every few months.

Also, there was the yellow 'Halloween Pound' which had the sweetness of vegetables, or the 'Hina Matsuri Special' which had pink, yellow, and green-colored different pound cakes on top of each other, and others which she only saw once throughout this year. And coupled with the fact that they were spaced out one every seven days, Celestine couldn't stop being charmed by them.

(Besides, it's unfair that they went out of their way to bring out rum raisin today, the day the 'one year of enjoyment' ended!)

Bringing up the practice that Otherworlders would have no idea about and partway venting her anger, she reminisced about rum raisin... and once again swallowed her saliva.

All the 'pound cakes' here each have a good otherworldly flavor to them, but rum raisin was something else. When she first ate it, she reflexively thought 'this is the food of the gods,' and on the rare rum raisin days, she always ate twice the amount.

(...Is, is it here yet?)

Having thought about rum raisin, Celestine had started to become restless. Waiting was painful. And then, the time had come.

"Thank you for waiting. Your pound cake and black tea set."

"Y, yes!"

She unintentionally gave him a smile. With the pound cake topped with a white, fluffy something placed in front of her eyes and lined on the plate, she unintentionally smiled widely.

"I'll bring out seconds very soon too."

The owner was also quite informed himself and raised his voice knowing the Celestine would order it once again. He then went back to the other customers.

“Oh god higher than the heavens watching over me. I give my thanks for bringing about the food that I will partake...”

Letting out the words of prayer from her mouth, she then took a silver fork in hand... and ate.

“Haah...”

She unknowingly let out her voice from the pound cake with rum raisin in it that she hadn't had in some months. That's how good it was. The mellow sweetness of the pound cake and the texture that resembled bread but was extremely different in terms of softness. When placed into the mouth, the faint aroma of alcohol spread out. By sucking plenty of that alcohol, it brought back the sweetness of the dried grapes which then brought forth sweetness when they were crushed on top of her tongue. On top of that, the softly spreading white, sweet fluff began to softly wrap around the flavor of the dried grapes and the sweetness held in the pastry itself.

Yellow cake, black dried grapes, and white fluff. Three things that weren't too sweet, but they definitely melted and mixed in her mouth, bringing forth a wonderful flavor. At that extravagant taste, Celestine was intoxicated for a short moment. Towards the fact that she tore the ban she placed on herself, she felt regret and resentment for her own weak will. After all that is said though, they dissolved in the middle of that sweet flavor.

Now that she had her first bite, there was no escaping. Celestine continued to eat fiercely. Without stopping her hands, in the blink of an eye, the pound cake disappeared from her plate.

“Fuu... Excuse me, could I have one more serving of pound cake?”

After that, she added one serving of sugar to the black tea that had a particular bitterness to it and used it to cleanse her palate before ordering seconds. People who knew the usual graceful Celestine would be shocked to see her greedy manner. Even more so if they knew that it was because of sweets.

To begin with, Celestine was not very fond of sweets. When she was eighteen and took on the 'one year of enjoyment,' she regularly had sweets that used plenty of sugar or honey, but after that, it was as if she no desire for them. Because of that, Celestine thought she didn't really like sweets... Right, she had thought that.

But that was wrong. After encountering this Other World's devilish, fearsome food known as pound cake, she realized this. She didn't dislike sweets... She just didn't know about sweets that were truly delicious, and her force of will to refrain herself from those sweets was weak.

It was easy to withstand that which you did not know. Celestine understood those words with her body. Celestine had continued to wait impatiently for the door to appear to travel back and forth from this place ever since she knew about it one year ago using the excuse of the 'one year of enjoyment.' Seven days ago, she realized that it had been one year since the first time she came to the Other World Dining Hall and fell into despair. And today, for the first time in her life, she had lost to her own desire.

"Fuu... Uuu."

After eating down to the last crumb and eating an extra serving than the usual two, Celestine was finally satisfied... and regretful. She couldn't withstand it. She had done it. That feeling whirled around her.

(Next, next time I should just not come here...)

As if to smooth things over, she thought that while placing down several silver coins before standing up. She never thought the final blow would be dealt there.

"Oh, are you heading back... Please wait just a moment."

Seeing that Celestine was standing up, the owner started to panic slightly before pulling back into the kitchen... and brought that out.

"Please take this. As thanks for always coming here. This is gift of gratitude."

What was brought out was a thin, long box with a picture of a puppy with wings drawn on it.

“Um... what is this?”

With its appearance, Celestine felt a seed of hope... and dread as she asked the owner. As if seeing through her, the owner grin and laughed harder...

“It’s a specially-made brandy cake that’s not normally seen, a cake that uses a large amount of liquor that has the flavor of rum raisin. Rum raisin. You seemed to have taken quite a liking to it so I’m sure you’ll enjoy this as well.”

Celestine who was thrown into despair said one thing.

“Br, brandy cake...?”

It was something she never heard of. But, from the meaning packed into her tone, the owner explained, and Celestine understood. This was something dangerous. If she got her hands on it, she couldn’t turn back, a devil’s deal.

(I never eaten it before. If I like rum raisin, I’ll enjoy it...)

At those words, she felt her stomach that was full of pound cake move. I want to try, that feeling started to well up.

“I was told that if you left it somewhere dark and cool, it should last for a few months. Well, he also said that after you open it, eat it fast, so you should eat with some friends.”

(I have to refuse. If I don’t refuse...)

While she was thinking that, Celestine received it. She ended up receiving it.

“...Thank you very much.”

As a smile floated on her face, she said her thanks.

“Alright, until next time.”

“Yes. Next time...”

And then Celestine finally turned around and left through the door. While part-way convinced that she would come once again.

And, that Otherworldly thing would be unseal the very next day.

The next day, Celestine resolved herself to taste the brandy cake. A cake with dried grapes and a stronger alcohol content than rum raisin. The moment she tasted it, she understood everything. She could no longer turn back, and so, she started to move.

“Lady Celestine! What... what kind of liquor is used in this!?”

The first one who asked was someone who was a nun and a commoner while also being a candidate for a high priest that Celestine had her eye on... and also at the same time was a dwarf that was rumored to be quite the alcoholic, Carlotta. The deliciousness of this pastry was magnificent, but on top of that, the aroma of this unknown liquor that filled this pastry was wonderful. She honestly felt that she wanted to try drinking it.

“Bitter. But, sweet. Delicious.”

The person who mutter few words while wholeheartedly gulping down cake was a half-elf changeling born between human parents, Anna, who boasted a long lifespan and strong magic. For Anna, from the time she was born to when she lived in the organization, this was her first experience. Pastry with a sweet aroma and bitter taste... which then turned into an overwhelming sweetness. Anna, who was being raised at the monastery before she became old enough to realize it, had no idea that this kind of food existed.

“Lady Celestine. It’s really tasty, this. I had some sweets in the kingdom before, but this is the first time I’ve had something this delicious... Who and where exactly did it come from? For someone to have made this...”

Anna wasn’t the only person who was unfamiliar with this pastry. As someone who was high-class descent in the kingdom, Julianne, who had a full knowledge of the capital’s luxuries, asked Celestine. Julianne did not know this pastry. To Julianne, the fact that it was unknown meant that nobody, never mind the Eastern Continent, the

whole world including the Western Continent did not know. There was no doubt that it was a 'special gift,' but as to who or what made it was completely unknown.

The sharing of the special gift. Hearing that, three elite people at this monastery had just gathered here. And what was brought out was this. A thin, long, beautiful box made from sturdy paper that held a mysterious, transparent bag that had no seams or holes. The moment it was opened, a faint, unknown, alcoholic smell wafted out around them carrying the taste of grape liquor.

And with Celestine's own hand, she divided it with a polished silver knife and lined the baked good in front of the three of them... Its taste was not normal.

"This is... right..."

At Julianne's question, Celestine had a smile rise to her face that had a sense of defeat drifting about it and said this.

"It's the cake of the devil. Right, I received it from a devil."

As she muttered that, Celestine, who was eating a piece of the baked good that was twice as large as the disciples, somehow had her smile brighten up. Celestine had decided within herself.

(Right, I must overcome this myself. This is god's trial. To do that, I must see through the truth behind this baked good and savor it until I'm tired of it.)

The decision to part-way put the cart before the horse.

...Afterward, the holy woman who rose up and became the pope even with the body of a woman, Celestine Fregran. With a mighty magical aptitude and a wide heart filled with compassion, she was a follower of the god of light. She had a vice that she could not stop loving called the 'cake of the devil.' One day, a devil passed this phantom cake to her and her three disciples that she was fond of.

It was a very sweet cake that was filled with alcohol, had a savory smell, a bitter taste, and never mind the disciples, even that Celestine was overcome by the temptation of its deliciousness, and it is said to be the cause of the temple of light becoming well-

versed in making sweets and changing it into a place of fervent worship for pastry chefs.

With the disciples' cooperation, when she could finally eat it, Pope Celestine was said to always have a smile on her face. Now that she had become the pope, the fact that she couldn't sever herself away from it was embarrassing for her... but even still, she smiled broadly at its devilish tasty flavor.



CHAPTER 12

BEEF STEAK

While looking at the unpleasant morning sun's light shine down and around the entrance of the hole in the ground, Romero fell into despair.

"The night has ended..."

"Wh, what should we do? Romero..."

Beside him, his lover, Julietta, tightly held onto Romero's hand.

"It'll be alright. Because I'll definitely protect you."

Feeling that hand shake with fear, Romero chewed his lip. Continuing to lurk in the pitch-darkness and living by himself for the longest time, Romero was supposed to know. What exactly it meant for him and Julietta to become lovers. But, he couldn't stop. Romero knew too much of Julietta's warm love to return to those long years of solitude.

For this reason, it was painful. Their pursuers were already drawing close... in other words, their death was drawing close.

(Shit! If I was by myself, it would still be acceptable...)

Right, Romero had still not given up. He, himself, was already stained. As an existence that was stained by the blood of the darkness and that had killed countless people and had even used them as nourishment. He would not complain about being killed after all that, and he had no intentions on doing so.

But Julietta was different. She had chosen to come along with him and bid farewell to the world of sunlight, but she still had a pure body that had not committed any sins. And so the two of them nurtured their love and chose the path that let them be with one another. Exactly because of that, he couldn't allow her to be taken along with him to the land of the dead with the goddess of darkness resided.

(Isn't there something... Something.)

It was too late to go outside. Their pursuers were drawing close, and more than anything, the sun had already risen. It was only a matter of time before their pursuers would find this hole in the ground that couldn't even be called a cave. Never mind if the moon, which housed the power of darkness and distributed that power to all those that lived in the land of the dead, was still in the night sky, if the sun, which symbolized light and life, shined during the time that their pursuers caught up with them, the future that the two of them had together would be shut closed. It was at that time.

"Ah!? Romero! Look! Th, that!"

Julietta who looked at the back of the hole let out a surprised voice.

"What the... a door!?"

Whether they were helped by the heavens, there was a single door there.

(What's this? Why is there a door... No, wait.)

There was a black door with a picture of a cat on it even though a moment ago there was nothing there. After being surprised by this unknown existence, Romero thought for a bit... Silent, he took Julietta's hand and walked.

"Romero? What is that door? Do you know something?"

While being pulled along by Romero who was drawing closer to the door, Julietta raised her questions.

"No, I don't know. But, it's has to be better than being here."

Giving that answer to Julietta, he put his hand to the door.

(Now then, is there something beyond this...)

At any rate, now that the sun had risen, they couldn't leave this hole until the end of the day. In that case, if they wanted to hold on to even the slightest hope for survival, they had no choice but to move forward. The sound a bell ringing came along as the

door opened, and they felt relieved as a dim room spread out before them. It seemed at the very least, that this was a place where the sun's light couldn't enter.

"Let's go."

Briefly, he urged Julietta.

"Yes. I decided to follow you no matter what. I'll be with you to the end."

Julietta had steadied her resolve in response, and with a pale face, she gave a single nod. And so the two of them took each other's hands and plunged forth into the dark place inside of the door. The moment the door slammed shut, the door that felt that a 'customer' has passed through disappeared.

And around the time the sun was drawing slightly closer to the southern sky.

"Shit! They're not here either!"

"Damn it! Curse that abomination! Where did he go?"

"It's morning already! They can't run away! Search! Slaughter him!"

"Lady Julietta... Hopefully she's safe..."

"No. That's not likely. She's probably already..."

Stomping, countless men entered the hole. There were warriors that were tightly grasping drawn silver swords that held great power towards the evil residents of the dark in their hands, magicians that had vast pools of knowledge, and priests, who served the god of light, wearing silver holy symbols and wielding wooden spears to kill Romero. All of the priests wore a wreath made of Galeo* flowers, which had a small particular smell to them, around their neck which offset their solemn appearances.

The best in the domain who were selected to find the lord's kidnapped daughter were desperately looking for Romero and Julietta while the morning sun shined down on them... About the fact that they escaped to a place where they couldn't be found, they still had no idea.

The two of them, having narrowly escaped their pursuers, investigated the room which had not a single light in it with their eyes that could pierce through any darkness.

“This is... an underground room it seems.”

What was beyond the door was a small underground room.

“I wonder what exactly this place is.”

Gently, Julietta who was close to Romero tightly huddled up to him and trembled. Thinking about the fact that this underground room was connected to that hole, this was quite the strange place. Many finely maintained tables and chairs were lined up, and on top of the tables were arranged bottles and jars made of glass that were probably left there as furnishings. The wall was decorated with paintings, and the wooden floor was glossed.

(A magician’s living room?... There’s no doubt that some kind of teleporter magic is involved.)

Romero who had lived ten times as long as Julietta was sensitive to the magic in the room as he sniffed it out and made that judgement. The inside of this room was filled with magic. Thankfully, there didn’t seemed to be any dangerous magic that would attack its ‘invited guests,’ but it was unknown what class of magic it was.

...In the back where a faint amount of light leaked out from, he felt the faint presence of a person. Mostly likely, that was the master of this place.

(Well, what sh...!?)

“Kyah!?”

The change suddenly fell upon them. Abruptly, the room became bright as day.

“Shit!? A trap...?”

“This light... It doesn’t hurt?”

The two of them that had protected their bodies by reflex realized that. The light that brilliantly shined on the two of them had no pain like the light from sun or the holy light that the followers of the wretched god of light manipulated. It seemed like it had not even the slightest amount of magic in it, and it simply illuminated the two of them.

“Uoh!?... Toh, welcome. You’ve come at quite an early time.”

He called out to the two of them with a deep voice. What called out to them was a middle-aged man standing at the border of the room in the back. The man had an orderly beard and a firm build with solid muscles where normally they would be withered away for someone his age.

(...Fumu, he doesn’t seem like a warrior or a magician, but...)

From the man’s movements and the sparse amount of magic inside of him, he didn’t seem to be something that would harm them... Seeing that he didn’t have the power to harm them, Romero let down his guard for the time being. Not noticing Romero’s behavior, the man continued speaking.

“I’m really sorry about this. I’m still in the middle of preparing... Are you alright? The two of you, your complexions don’t seem well.”

“Ah, aah. Please don’t mind that. It’s something both of us were born with. We are very much healthy.”

To the man who curiously asked without noticing ‘what exactly’ he was faced with, Romero instantly answered. It wasn’t a lie. It was true that he was feeling a little lacking on sleep, but thanks to the fact that not one shred of the sun’s light had touched him, his physical condition itself was fine.

“More importantly, what is this place?”

Pulling himself back together, Romero asked.

He knew that the door in the hole was a teleporting type. Which meant that he should think of this as a completely different place.

“This is the ‘Western Style Cathouse,’ a restaurant. But ‘people on the other side’ such as yourself, Sir, call this place the Other World Dining Hall.”

The man answered like always. As this restaurant’s owner.

“A restaurant is it?”

“Other World, Dining Hall? Then does that mean that this is this an Other World?”

At that answer, Romero and Julietta asked that at the same time.

“Well, yes. Just so you know, in this world, this is an average restaurant. But for people on the other side such as yourselves, this place is otherworldly.”

And so he continued to speak.

“That being the case, would you like to eat something? Even though my restaurant looks like this, it’s quite popular you know.”

As he said that, a smile rose on his face.

“Romero, wouldn’t it be better if we ate something?... Um, if we do that, we would become this restaurant’s ‘guests.’”

“I see, that makes sense...”

With the words from the modest Julietta, Romero nodded. If this was a restaurant, if they ordered food, they would become ‘customers.’ If they were customers... Even if they were to stay here until the sun set, there wouldn’t be any complaints. If there was a way to peacefully settle all of this, this would be the best way.

“Alright. For the time being, we’ll have two servings of the most expensive dish in this restaurant. And... if there is any wine as red as blood, we would like to have that too.”

And so, Romero placed his order. Thankfully, they had money. They had no idea what kind of cooking the Other World had, but for the time being, there shouldn’t be any problems if it was the most expensive thing.

“The most expensive dish? That would be the beef steak... That’s grilled cow’s meat, but would you be fine with that? I still haven’t done my preparations for the beef stew, you see. And red wine right?”

Listening to Romero’s order, the owner confirmed it with him.

It was a dish that was as expensive as the beef stew in the Other World Dining Hall. What was traditionally called beef steak from the previous owner’s time was not very popular with Otherworlders. It seemed like cow’s meat was not very liked. The owner asked again him again as he confirmed the order.

“Grilled cow’s meat huh... Well, that’s fine. We’ll have that. Aah, by the way, she and I can’t stand the smell of galeo. Please don’t use any galeo.”

At first, when Romero heard it was grilled cow’s meat, he made an uncertain face, but pulling himself back together, he gave a nod. At any rate, ordering food was the condition to stay at this restaurant without any complaints. If it was unappetizing, they could just leave it there. Galeo which was often used to cover up the bad smell of meat... As long as the thing that could be considered a natural enemy to Romero’s kind wasn’t used, there would be no problems.

“Understood. Well then, please wait just a moment. Please sit anywhere you’d like.”

The owner pulled back to the back of the restaurant as he accepted the order.

“He left...”

“...Somehow, we were saved.”

As they sat in a random chair, the two of them spat out their stretched nerves along with a breath. It had been three days since Romero and Juliette fled hand-in-hand. There was no way their pursuers could come all the way here.

“But grilled cow’s meat is the most expensive dish... What kind of restaurant is this place?”

After a pause and have plenty of time to look around, Romero muttered that.

“I know... Even though the inside of the restaurant is so beautiful.”

Julietta was of the same opinion as she looked around. The restaurant was well maintained and a very comforting place. The inside of the room was not hot or cold but kept at a comfortable condition, and the furnishing and ornaments were plain but their shape and the fact that they were lacquered with gloss made them seem like high-class goods. On top of that, glass bottles were lined on top of the tables and were filled with expensive spices and sugar that could be freely used. According to Romero and Julietta’s common sense, this should be a very high-class restaurant.

In spite of that, cow’s meat was there. To Romero and the others, cow’s meat could be expressed in the single phrase ‘shoe soles’ to summarize them. Normally speaking of cows, they were slower than horses but raised for their strength for field work in place of farming tools, for milking, or possibly for both purposes. As for the meat, when the cow grew old and weakened, got injured and could no longer move, or got too old to give birth to calves and bear milk, it was normal for cows to be processed and eaten. Of course, its meat failed in comparison to the pigs and chickens that were raised to be killed for meat, the sheep and goats that were raised for their wool and skins, and the wild boar meat that hunters brought back. Cow’s meat was hard and stank, and it was something fed to dogs or the poor and peasants ate. That kind of thinking was the basis for all of this.

It would be better if it was used in a stew where it was cooked for a long time while constantly removing the scum, but just grilling it generally couldn’t make a decent meal. The line of thinking of the two of them was normal in the Other World.

“Well, it’s fine. It’s not like we ordered it because we wanted something to eat.”

The payment was something that was for allowing them to stay here. Romero explained it as that as he lightly answered and letting out a single yawn.

“I’m starting to feel drowsy...”

“Yes, me too...”

As they stayed in the comfortable restaurant, they started to feel like dozing off. Because normally at this time, they would be in a deep sleep, it was something that couldn't be helped. As they stayed like that, the owner brought out the food.

"Thank you for waiting, your beef steak. It's been seasoned with Chaliapin sauce, I mean, there's no galeo but... is oranie alright?"

The owner asked that. He realized it after he made it, but if strong smell vegetables themselves were no good, then the Otherworldly things called oranie... onions would be no good as well. If it was going to be like that, he would have no choice but to make it again using grated daikon soy sauce.

"Aah, it's fine. As long as there isn't any galeo, you don't have to worry."

"I'm fine with it as well. Thank you."

Romero and Julietta nodded at the seasoning the owner used. Only galeo was no good, they had no problems with other vegetables. And also, there was no problems using strong smelling vegetables with the strong stink of cow's meat.... At any rate, they had no expectations whatsoever.

"Oh, that's good to hear. Anyway, thanks for waiting. Your beef steak."

With a relieved face, the owner lined up the food that was carried and brought on a wagon. What he brought out was meat that sent sizzling sounds into the air, soup, and bread.

From that meat, a fragrant smell drifted about.

"...This is cow's meat?"

Looking at it, Romero asked without thinking. It was completely different from what he was expecting.

"Yes. At our place, we can't really use Wagyu beef, but it's made from pretty good cow. I'm sure it's delicious."

The owner gave a nod to Romero and placed the food in front of them. On top of a black metal plate was the beef steak. Varied and colorful vegetables were thinly sliced and colored the top of the steak, and meat juices and brown something mixed into a sauce covered it as well as a good burnt smell came from the top of the iron plate.

“And this is the wine... grape liquor.”

“Y, yes... thank you.”

He got confirmation from the two of them and gently poured wine from the bottle into the wineglasses. The transparent, dark wine filled up the prepared shaped glasses.

“Well then, feel free to have seconds of the soup and bread. Enjoy.”

After placing the food in front of them, the owner said that one thing and headed back.

“...It's way better, than I expected.”

Looking at the food right in front of his eyes, Romero muttered that bit by bit. From the food right in front of him, he felt a very delicious atmosphere. A savory smell and vivid appearance. He swallowed his saliva without even noticing. He had no expectations, but the savory smell of grilled meat that came from the beef steak made it seem all the more appetizing.

“Well then, shall we eat?”

“Yes.”

The both of them nodded to each other and took knife and fork in hand. Thinking about it, the meal they had yesterday night was a raw rabbit that the both of them chewed on. In that regard, just having a decent meal was something to be thankful for. The forks pierced the meat, the knives cut it.

“Ooh, its tender...”

At that sensation, Romero was surprised. Whether the way it was prepared was good or the meat was of good quality from the beginning, the meat was so soft that you wouldn't think that it was cow's meat. The knife quickly entered and cut it apart. At

the place it was cut, the meat had a faint red color to it. From there, meaty juices flowed and poured out, and when it fell on the black plate, it made a faint sizzling sound. As that sound entered their sharp ears, the two of them stabbed a bite-sized cut piece of meat with their fork and brought it to their mouths.

“...Oh my.”

At that taste, Julietta unintentionally let her voice leak out. That meat was surprisingly soft. Holding it her mouth, when she chewed it, it was easily bitten apart and the flavor of high-quality meat and fat spread in the middle of her mouth. The overflowing meaty juices mixed with the salt and the high-quality seasoning known as pepper that was added to the meat, the sharp taste of thinly cut oranie and the sweetness of the cooked oranie, and the strong flavor of the brown sauce, which had an unknown, strong, delicious flavor that the two of them did not know about, to create a magnificent flavor.

“...So the most expensive thing has this kind of flavor.”

At that flavor, Julietta gave her impressions. After she had tried it, she now knew. The meat that was of good quality to begin with along with the way it was carefully prepared to bring out its flavor to the limit was so soft that it was hard to think of it as cow's meat, and the sauce that was used to season had an elaborately-designed wonderful flavor. The multicolored, fresh vegetables that came with it were also delicious.

To Julietta, who was a noble's daughter and appropriately knew about the things known as luxuries, even if she was unexperienced with it, she couldn't describe this as something that was just grilled meat even if she was incorrect. That's what it meant to be the most expensive thing on the menu.

“I heard a rumor about it but... cow's meat that was raised to be eaten had this kind of flavor.”

Romero who had the same opinion remembered such a thing. Thinking about it, in the kingdom or the empire, there was a country as big as a dukedom that raised cows for the sole purpose of taking their meat, and he heard of people serving the crushed meat of newly-born bulls when there was sufficient labor already.

The meat of young cows that did not know an ounce of labor and were carefully fattened was unbelievably softer and delicious than normal meat, and it was something appropriate when entertaining royalty and nobility. It was unthinkable that such a meal could be found in a street side restaurant.

“No, this is the ‘Other World Dining Hall,’ isn’t it?”

And the words that the owner said, this is the ‘Other World Dining Hall.’ He finally understood the meaning behind those words. I see, the only restaurants that could bring out something this delicious around here... did not exist in Romero’s world as far as he knew it.

“...As I thought, escaping here was the right thing to do.”

“Yes. If it’s here, father, the knights, and the priests can’t chase us here.”

The two of them took their transparent glasses filled with red wine in hand.

“To our future living in the night’s darkness...”

“With the blessings of the goddess of darkness...”

Their words of prayer along with the wine was very clear, and at its delicious flavor that had no trace of being watered down, the two of them looked eye-to-eye and laughed together. At that moment, the two of them no longer paid any attention to the fact that the foul sun was shining in the sky at this time and passed the time in happiness and a great deal of satisfaction.

The two of them had only returned to the hole around the time the sun had completely set.

“It seems like we’re saved.”

“Aah. At one point, I wondered what was going to happen to us.”

After that, the two of them drank cup after cup of wine, savored soft white bread, soup, and various other dishes, and stayed in the Other World Dining Hall until the sun had set. Customer after customer had visited the restaurant and ate the food there as they

pleased. From ordinary commoners to nobles... and even a princess that was way above Julietta. Knights and samurai, mercenaries and warriors. Magicians and onmyoujis. Demi-humans such as elves and dwarves, on top of that even things such as monsters like lizardmen and lilliputs... All kinds of customers gathered at that restaurant.

They did as they pleased, ordered food that Romero and Julietta had never seen, and ate them in such as appetizing ways.

“But I was surprised at that time. To think that there was a high priest of light.”

“Fufuh. That’s right. I remember your face at that time, Romero.”

At around early noon, a young woman, who could only be reached by a handful of geniuses at the monastery even if someone were to devote their whole life to the road of belief, wearing a golden holy symbol which was the signs of a high priest (judging from the shape of it, they could guess that she was a believer of the god of light) led along three young girls who seemed like disciples, and at that moment, the two of them froze. Julietta fainted on the spot and was supported by Romero to keep her from falling over, and after that, Romero held his breath to make himself unnoticeable while carefully watching them.

Fortunately, the high priest which seemed to be the mediator of the group sat at the end of the restaurant, or maybe she noticed them and refrained from beginning to ‘exterminate abominations’ at this restaurant to not be a bother. Without once looking over at Romero and Julietta, the four of them enjoyed sweets and tea and even went as far as to buy souvenirs before heading back. Since they safely made it out alive, it ended up becoming a funny story, but if at that time they fought with the high priest that was said to massacre luxuries, it was easy to imagine that the both of them would lose their lives. In that sense, it was possible that the two of them had good luck.

“Well then... shall we go?”

“Yes. I’ll follow you... no matter where.”

And so, thanks to their magnificent luck which led to them coming out with their lives, the two lovers took each other’s hand and exchanged a kiss. No matter what

difficulties they might come across, they vowed to live together. It was for this reason that Romero sucked Julietta's blood, and Julietta chose to throw away everything she had until then to go together with Romero.

"Is it just a bit further? Your hideaway."

"Aah. If we continue to fly the rest of the night, we're sure to make it. It's just a little bit more, please press on... After we safely escape, it would be nice to go back to that restaurant."

"Yes, I think so too. We couldn't possibly thank the person at that restaurant enough... Most of all, the food there was very delicious."

At last we made it this far. While becoming full from that feeling... the two of them turned into the appearance of a swarm of countless bats and flew on into the tranquil night illuminated by the full moon.

Translator's note:

*Galeo is what Otherworlders call garlic.

CHAPTER 13

SANDWICH

In the Other World Dining Hall, there are a fair number of customers called regulars.

They live in various places in the Other World and use the 'doors' that they have found and secured themselves, and once every seven days, they visit the Other World Dining Hall when it opens. And like that, customers can satisfy themselves with the Other World's food as a part of their daily lives.

While having the characteristic of materializing in places that have a strong amount of magic, the Other World Dining Hall's doors materialize without choosing the place they appear.

In the middle of the city or the street, they rarely appear in places that are easily accessible such as inside of a castle, and the doors are usually found standing alone in hard-to-reach places that are separated from habitation. Among them, there are doors that have not even been used once since they first appeared.

With such circumstances, many of the Other World Dining Hall's customers, especially customers that are regulars, are strange people from all over the Other World. These strange group of regulars that were gathered from every nook and cranny of the world make sure that they rarely interfere with one another. Even if there were celebrities with names famous throughout the world or even if there were existences that were akin to natural enemies with how bad their relationships with one another were, it was common courtesy to pretend to not see each other.

At any rate, this is the Other World. The common sense of their world does not work here and enforcing it should not be what they should doing. Speaking of that, bad behavior will make you receive an 'entrance ban' from the owner which would put you in the miserable plight where you couldn't enter the restaurant ever again. Because of that, regulars normally forgot their quarrels and respected one another, and if a customer came that couldn't recognize that at first glance, they would be stopped from entering... however, just like in cooking, there are exceptions.

The customers that come one every seven days every time called regulars usually have at least one ‘favorite food’ which they can’t stop loving that becomes the source of their nickname.

And everyone firmly believes that their ‘favorite food’ is the most delicious thing in the restaurant... and whenever there’s a discussion about which one is tastier, it usually becomes a quarrel. This day just so happened to be one of those days.

“Hah!? What are you saying? Even though you don’t know what it tastes like when you leave it until morning so that the sauce get soaked into the bread and cutlet!”

“That’s my line, little girl! You’re the one who doesn’t know anything! The perfect combination of schripe and tartar sauce is something that can’t be beaten even if it’s cold!”

The ones quarreling were ‘Minced Cutlet,’ a young woman who was a lightly-dressed adventurer while having somewhat of a good upbringing to her, and ‘Fried Shrimp,’ a knight that was still young but had a well-trained body wearing a renowned sword and well-tailored clothes, two regulars who recently started to come to the restaurant compared to the others. The reason they began to quarrel was because they by chance sat in nearby seats.

“Hm? What are those two arguing about?”

‘Teriyaki’, the samurai who came after and didn’t understand the situation, asked his close friend at this restaurant ‘Roast Cutlet,’ a old regular who was as skinny as a dead tree.

“Oh. Apparently it’s about which one is tastier when you put it in a ‘sandwich.’”

Like always, Roast Cutlet was drinking the Other World’s ale, draft beer, from a transparent mug as he answered. It all started when the two of them were ordering ‘sandwiches’ filled with their favorite food for takeout.

—A type of food where various ingredients were put between white bread.

Delicious even when cold.

Easy to take it with you.

For the description of a sandwich in the menu written in the Eastern Continental language, these were the words that were written. These so-called various ingredients implied were a tricky subject and made it so that there were a vast variety of sandwiches, and if you asked the Owner, he could make just about anything besides the soups into a tasty sandwich.

Just so you know, the three normal kinds of sandwiches that the restaurant had was finely hashed eggs dressed with mayonnaise, smoked meat and cheese wrapped in leafy vegetables, and marinated fish dressed with mayonnaise, but most of the regulars would order a sandwich with their favorite food. In another sense, the sandwiches could be considered a hidden menu for the restaurant.

“Good grief. They’re arguing about that?”

At hearing that, Teriyaki let out a deep sigh. Absolutely pointless. To get that worked up over something like the different kinds of sandwiches.

“I hear you... At this rate, I won’t be able to eat until they stop.”

As they said that, these two friends stood up from their seats and approached the two bickering people.

“Like I said! Minced cutlet tastes the best! The minced cutlet here tastes good even when cold you know! The thinly-minced meat is filled with meaty juices, and when you bite and chew into it, all those the juices flow out. And combined with the breading that’s almost black with salty-sweet sauce and the tender, cut vegetables, it’s something amazing!”

Minced Cutlet would not budge a single step. The gift she received the first time she visited this restaurant were some minced cutlet sandwiches. The sandwiches which were completely cold because she left them alone for a while had the deliciousness of minced cutlet but also a hard-to-differentiate flavor to them. After that, every time she came to the restaurant, she would always order some for takeout.

“Hmph! This is exactly why children from the kingdom are so troublesome! Like I was telling you before, schripe and tartar sauce! This combination isn’t something that can be shaken up from just being cooled down! Every time you bite into the shrimp cutlet which is made of chewy schripe, the sweet flavor of schripe spreads all over your mouth! It then properly mixes with the sourness of the tartar sauce and becomes a wonderful flavor! And did you know? This restaurant’s shrimp cutlet sandwiches are sandwiched with red fruit vegetables and a green leafy vegetables! That’s why after you bite into it, the white meat of the schripe and the colorful green leafy vegetables and red fruits gives it an appetizing appearance! The flavor is, of course, something that can’t be compared to minced cutlet which is just brown on the outside and the inside!”

Fried Shrimp wouldn’t take a single step back either. The second time he came to this restaurant, he was taught about the hidden menu by the legendary master fencer he was with at the time. The most delicious schripe fried dish at this restaurant is sandwiched in bread and would show a different kind of allure when left over time. That allure was something that couldn’t be beaten by the many dishes at this restaurant, even minced cutlet which was delicious in its own way.

To the two of them of wouldn’t budge a single step, a cough was given to them.

“Hey, hey. You two, don’t argue so much.”

“This is a place to enjoy your meals. They say conversation is something like a spice to enjoy your meal with, but if you go too far, you’ll ruin the flavor of the food.”

At those words, the two of them looked over without thinking and became silent. On one hand, you had one of the great heroes of the past, the kingdom’s number one... in other words, the world’s number one great sage. On the other, you had the wandering master fencer from another country whose skill with a blade could roar throughout the world. Being admonished by the two people who were one of the most famous people at the restaurant, the two still young regulars instinctively became quiet.

“...Yeah. I guess I did say too much... I think shrimp cutlet is delicious in its own way.”

“No, it’s my fault as well. Let me apologize... People have their own preferences after all.”

The two of them apologized to one another even though it was clear that they still were reluctant when they said it. At those two, they remembered the times during the previous owner's era where Teriyaki and Roast Cutlet would have arguments over food.

(How nostalgic. Thinking about it, we also had disputes about which food was delicious.)

(That guy Minced Cutlet also said minced cutlet was the most delicious and would always fight with that guy Croquette... It must be in the blood.)

And so the two, who were reminiscing about their past, fired words of admonishment towards the two who were young and easier to get riled up.

"That's exactly right. Minced cutlet and shrimp cutlet are definitely delicious. But the most delicious thing sandwiched in bread has to be a roast cutlet sandwich."

"It's best to eat cutlet while it's still hot. What goes best in a sandwich has to be teriyaki which tastes good even when cold."

...The two veterans reflexively looked at each other. With faces of astonishment.

"...You, weren't you absolutely a part of the rice faction? To being with, if you put teriyaki in bread... how would it taste?"

Roast cutlet asked Teriyaki who standing next to him without thinking. Normally, when Teriyaki would order his favorite teriyaki chicken, it would be with rice, and he would only order bread on a whim when he was having a different dish. Thinking along those lines, a teriyaki chicken sandwich was out of his expectations... In the first place, he had to keep in mind whether the sweet and salty soy sauce flavor of teriyaki chicken would go well with bread.

"You too. Normally you don't even look at bread and just eat nothing but beer and roast cutlet. Why are you talking about putting roast cutlet into bread?"

On the other side, Teriyaki also asked surprised. He knew that Roast Cutlet would always come earlier than he would and stay later than he would, but he only saw him eating roast cutlet and drinking draft beer during that time.

Sometimes he would eat a different dish, but in that case, he still would have beer and never anything sandwiched in bread. He knew bread and cutlet had a good affinity for one another, but Roast Cutlet ordering that was out of his expectations. The two of them, still in disbelief at each other's choices, continued to speak out their respective answers.

"No, no. I get one roast cutlet sandwich for takeout every month, you know? Without any vegetables, only cutlet, sauce, and mustard. I eat those three things sandwiched in bread when they're cold. Exactly because it's cold, you can enjoy the meat covered in fat as much as you'd like. The juices coming from the meat mixes with the sauce and gets wrapped up in soft bread. And the spiciness of just a little bit of mustard tightens it all together into something amazing."

Roast Cutlet explained his sometimes usual habit. Right when the restaurant is about to close, almost when it's dark enough that a demon dragon would come, he would leave and sleep... and endure until noon the next day to eat his roast cutlet sandwich. Compared to regular bread, it was heavy. The roast cutlet which soaked in plenty of sauce was bulky and would be like a stone in his stomach, giving him a nice feeling of fullness. Roast cutlet was his long time 'favorite' midday treat ever since the previous owner's era.

"No, no. Although I recently learned this... teriyaki goes well with bread. That sweet and salty tare sauce* covering the thin slices of teriyaki chicken and fresh cule**. And the fresh raw onions which are sandwiched in bread with butter and mustard mysteriously go well together. In the first place, I heard bread with teriyaki is very popular in this Other World."

Teriyaki's side wouldn't lose as well. Previously, when he went with Fried Shrimp and taught him about sandwiches, the owner taught him about teriyaki sandwiches. It had a magnificent flavor that broke down his prejudice that bread and teriyaki did not complement one another, and he was enthralled with it in a single blow.

The both of them wouldn't budge a single step... the two of them being stubborn scowled at each other and it did not take much time for them to argue.

Like this, arguments started to burn their way to the other customers in the restaurant.

From the longtime comers to the newcomers, possibly since it was the time when a large number of regulars would come, each of them told their own favorites to each other.

"...If you're going to have a sandwich, I would absolutely have a napolitan dog using a hotdog bun. Did you know? The napolitan at this restaurant is made with a strong flavor when it's going to be in a sandwich. That way, the sweet and sour ketchup flavor of napolitan doesn't lose to the bread, and it becomes the means to the best flavor."

The young son of a noble of the kingdom suggested the daring idea of combined a noodle dish with bread along with his assessment that it was a wonderful thing.

"...Well, well. That young person is ignorant, it seems. If you're going to be talking about delicious noodles inside of a bun, it has to be yakisoba drifting with the strong smell of sauce. The finishing touches for yakisoba which only has meat, cabbage, and noodles are red pickled ginger and deep green herbs which paints picture for the eyes as well."

"Although it pains to be to of same opinion with someone like you, I have to agree. Although it's not a match for freshly-made okonomiyaki, the deliciousness of yakisoba sandwiched in bread is peerless with the flavor of the sweet and sour sauce, pig's meat, cabbage, and the added flavor of red pickled ginger."

The onmyouji and samurai from the continent to the west unanimously agreed as they talked about how cabbage and the flavor of sauce made yakisoba wonderful and superior.

"...Um, for me, if I was going to have a sandwich, I think a fruit sandwich with sweet fruits and whipped cream would be the best. Um, the sweetness of soft whipped cream and the sweetness of ripe fruit are completely different, so I think it would be very delicious if you were to combine them."

The beautiful princess of the empire gave an example of a sweet sandwich with plenty of cream that she was addicted to after recently getting it for takeout.

“...If you’re going to have a fruit sandwich, I think custard would match better. That way its rich sweetness is stronger and is able to mix with the flavor of the fruit and bread without losing, and it’s harder to melt than whipped cream.”

The witch princess of the dukedom who loved this restaurant’s bewitching sweet known as custard pudding more than anything else pushed for the same fruit sandwich but filled with custard cream which was similar in taste to custard pudding.

Thus, the restaurant was wrapped in an hour long clamor.

Which sandwich was the most delicious?

All the customers who figured out a ‘hidden trick’ for the dishes that they had eaten before, and the seeds of dispute never ran out.

“...Senseless.”

Looking at all the hustle and bustle, an elf who visited this restaurant half a year ago, Faldania, looked on with cold eyes. While she, who had her pride wounded and set out on a journey, ate the same tofu steak that she encountered half a year ago in this restaurant, she looked with half-closed eye on the others who were having a heated argument with each other.

She was not a regular. This time she had, by chance, heard of a close-by door from a passing halfling and just stopped by for a short visit... although it was a three day detour from the her destination which was the elven capital, to an elf with a long lifespan, that much was nothing.

“Fuu.”

After eating her tofu steak which tasted just as it did half a year ago, the elf put down her fork.

“Thank you. It was delicious.”

She honestly said her impressions to the human owner... If she didn't recognize him out of stubbornness, that in itself would be a sense of defeat.

"I see. Thank you very much."

The owner was used to the ways of their world, and towards elves, he said nothing unnecessary and lowered his head.

"...Now that I think about it, is there no way to get takeout rice at this restaurant?"

Casually, she asked about something that was bothering her. The bread at this restaurant had the faint smell of milk in it which made her not want to eat it, but the rice was delicious. She asked that from that feeling. But.

"...Well, if you ask me if there is a way, there is."

The owner pondered for a moment and then answered.

"...There is?"

It was out of her expectations, no, in a sense, it was an answer that she expected, and in response, Faldania asked the owner this surprised.

"No well, since we call ourselves a western-style restaurant, it's not listed on the menu..."

As he said that, the owner gave the name of this menu.

"If I make it a grilled rice ball, then I think you could have it for takeout."

As long as the Western Style Cathouse allowed unlimited serving of rice, he basically would cook enough rice so that there would some left over. It wouldn't be good if he were to put out the leftover rice the next day, so it would be the employees' meal or possibly it would be effectively used as supper after the restaurant closed. Perhaps it was popular at that time, but the owner himself would coat it in mirin*** soy sauce and cook it, making grilled rice balls.

It was a simple dish where he would mold the left over rice into the a hard rice ball, coat them in mirin soy sauce and miso, and grill them, but the savory grilled outside and the smell of soy sauce and miso wafting off of it made it quite popular so that even when there was a lot of leftover rice, if he were to make it in to grilled rice balls, a large plate's worth of them would disappear into the empty stomachs of the employees in the blink of an eye.

Of course, when he would serve them to customers, it was necessary that they were a bit more luxurious than when he would make them for himself to eat or for those who were behaving themselves at work, but since they made luxuriously, it would be okay to take money for them.

"Then give me that. The food at human cities aren't that tasty."

Faldania ordered with a straight face... It was this restaurant she was talking about after all. She believed that they would bring out a dish that she couldn't even imagine again.

"Understood. Please wait just a moment."

Saying that, the owner headed back to the kitchen.

(What should I do for the seasonings? For now I'll sprinkle kelp, soy sauce, and mirin over the grains for one, green onions miso for another... and for the last one, should I try mixing in some salted kelp?)

While thinking that, the owner started to do preparations for the grilled rice balls and... the preparations for the bread. The owner who had managed this restaurant for over ten years was experienced. On a day like this where there were many arguments, he would have to cook more than usual.

"Oh enough! If you eat, you'll understand! Owner! One minced cutlet sandwich for this blockhead please!"

"In that case, get me a shrimp cutlet sandwich! Give it to this little girl!"

“Hey owner! Give me what they call a teriyaki chicken sandwich! If you’re going to say that much, let’s test it out!”

“Give me a roast cutlet sandwich over here! It’s going to be better than a teriyaki sandwich anyway!”

“Owner, please give me what they call yakisoba bread. These sauce-flavored noodles sound interesting.”

“Then give me a napolitan dog! I want to try out the taste!”

“Well then, I will partake in the same. I leave it to you, owner.”

“...If you’re as far as to say that, we’ll just have to eat it here and compare. If we do that, the answer will become clear.”

“As you wish! Excuse me! One serving each of fruit sandwiches with whipped cream and custard please!”

Just as he thought, the orders had come. He bitterly laughed at just how everything came within expectations.

“Coming right up!”

Without even stopping his hands, the owner loosened his mouth, turned towards the customers, and answered in a loud voice.

Translator's notes:

*Tare is a general term for dipping sauces that are used in grilling like teriyaki or used for sushi.

**Cule is possibly what Otherworlders call cucumber. I can't seem to find it in the author's encyclopedia but this is what I'm guessing from the other instances he uses it and how it similar to kyuuri, the Japanese name for cucumber.

***Mirin is a rice wine condiment similar to sake but with a lower alcohol content but with more sugar.

CHAPTER 14

HOTCAKES

In the depths of a thick forest rarely touched by people, there was a small village without a name. Its residents numbered roughly one hundred people who wore matching grass-dyed clothes and lived a modest life off of the nuts and fruits from the nearby trees.

The residents of this village were called lilliputs, people small enough to ride on the palm of a human hand. Unlike faeries who were small like them but had wings to fly around in a large range and who often associated with humans, lilliputs normally lived in the small range where they built their village and rarely associated with anyone other than lilliputs. This village's lilliputs were like other lilliputs in that they rarely associated with humans save for an old woman magician living in an isolated house in the forest, who traded copper and silver plates that could be worked into things like pans and kitchen knives with some blacksmithing in exchange for fruits that were ingredients for medicine, and one other person. Generally, they were born in the village, grew up in the village, and died in the village. These were the little people who lived out their days just like a human would.

Well then, these people had a day that they looked forward to once every seven days. The men who would normally be putting their spirits into their work, the women who would be working hard on the housework, and the children who would be frolicking and playing about would all depart to the same place.

Their destination was the Other World Dining Hall. To them, it was a day that they could call a festival.

On the day they would depart to the Other World Dining Hall, they would assemble in a small, open space in the middle of a forest that was a little bit away from their village.

“Allright! It’s tied down!”

A young man, who was said to be the number one master of climbing trees in the village, fixed a rope made of vines around the golden protrusion so that it would face downwards and then called out to the five men who were waiting on standby. It was quite the painstaking task to climb the 'black wall' which had almost no handholds. Nevertheless, countless people have climbed up to the 'golden protrusion,' but when it came to times like these, he was the one who would usually climb it.

"Allright! Everyone, pull! One, two!"

"~~~~~"Heave-ho, heave-ho!"~~~~~"

"You can do it, daddy!"

"Just a little more! Keep going!"

Matching the rhythm of the village chief's voice, the men of the village pulled the rope simultaneous as they received encouragement from the women and children.

Kiiiiiii...

A faint sound came from the black wall... which looked like a door with a picture of cat drawn on it from far away as it opened. It was extremely troublesome to open this door for powerless lilliputs when compared to other far-off giant races. It was necessary for the men of the village to tie a rope made of vines around the doorknob and pull like they just did.

"Alright, it's open... Now's our chance to go through!"

When there was a big enough gap for them, the villagers followed the instructions of the village chief who judged that now was the time and slipped past the door's gap. First were the elderly and the women breastfeeding their babies. Then there were the children who could walk by themselves to a certain extent. And the last, before the door closed, were the men. Once they all passed through, the door closed. And like that, the door silently disappeared, and the opening in the forest once again took back its serenity.

There was a room filled with bright lights that were a different color from the light in the forest. Then a voice from the heavens came shaking down on the villagers who were in a little nook of the room.

—Welcome.

The voice that called out to them belonged to this restaurant's owner who was so big that they had to look up to them. The owner knew. After the door would open slightly and small people would restlessly enter, it meant that they had come to the restaurant.

The owner headed to the back for a moment and brought out a tray that was meant for bringing out food with a wet towel on it. He then brought it gently very close to the floor and said this.

—Let me guide you to your seats, please come.

The people of the village were used to this, so one-by-one they hopped up to the top of the tray.

—Well then, let's go...

When about half of the villagers managed to get on the tray, the owner lifted up the fully loaded tray and led them to an open seat.

“Waaaaah! This is so coool!”

“Wah! It's dangerous! Gonna fall!”

“Hey now, make sure to wipe your hands and feet. If they're not clean, you can't get off.”

Having been suddenly raised to a high place and shown various races eating food, the children started to become excited, and their mothers rebuked them. They then wiped their hands and the bottom of their shoes using the gigantic wet cloth on top of the tray. And in time, the tray was placed gently on top of the table, and villagers with properly wiped hands and shoes got off on top of the table.

—Well then, I'll go bring the rest over.

The owner said that one thing to the villagers who all got off on top of the high table and who were restlessly looking around, and then he once again went to the entrance of the restaurant carrying the tray. He then let the remaining waiting villagers ride on top of the tray and brought them over to the table.

—Would you like the usual order?

Looking over the top of the table and the restaurant's entrance to make sure that he had finished carrying everyone over, the owner asked the lilliputs this just in case. At that confirmation, the villagers all simultaneously nodded their heads, and wearing beautiful clothes, the most beautiful girl in the village, the village chief's only daughter, gently held up a large silver plate with a face casted in it. It was a large silver plate made by humans that the lilliputs had earned by selling fruits to the witch in the forest, and normally, the village's craftsman would cut it apart and use it to make silver tableware or ornaments. Twice every month, they had a promise with the owner to give him one of those plates.

—Thank you. Please wait just a moment.

The owner took it with his thumb and index finger and headed to the back of the kitchen. And to cook and bring out the thing that those little people couldn't stop loving.

“Wah! So hiiigh!”

“So wiiide!”

“Wait! Don't go over there! What if you fall over!?”

“Heh~, so the village was more desolate in the past?”

“Aah, it became like this when the door appeared. Before that, there was about as half as much people.”

“Now that I think about, are the people who migrated here doing well?”

“They're probably fine. I got a glimpse of them before. They were wearing otherworldly clothes but there's no doubt it was them.”

Before what they ordered came, they passed the time doing what they pleased. Because if they ran wildly they would fall off, the mothers warned their simpleminded children who were running around. Adults amused themselves by exchanging rumors. It wasn't that long until the food came out, but everyone was restless when they remembered that sweetness.

And so, the owner finally brought out what they were waiting for.

—Thank you for waiting. Your hotcakes.

With a thump, he placed the large, large hotcakes on the table. Placed around them were pots as big as buckets filled to the brim with three kinds of sweet honey. At the appearance of the once-out-of-seven-days feast, the villagers spontaneously let out a cheer. Just to eat this, they all left behind their work in the village one time out of seven days to come here.

“Ooh, owner! Sorry, but could you cut it up for us?”

The village chief shouted with a loud voice so that he could pass his words to the owner. If he didn't, the small lilliput's voice would even reach the owner.

—Sure.

The owner nodded, and with a fork, he spread around the butter on top of the hotcakes and cut them into bite-sized with a knife... for the villagers, they were cut to a more than enough large enough size. The villagers swallowed their saliva with a gulp at the smell of the sweet hotcakes that were entangled with melting butter that was spreading out them.

—Well then, enjoy. I'll bring out seconds very soon.

Then, at the moment that the owner cut up all of the hotcakes and called out to the villagers, they all let out a cry of joy while flooding towards the hotcakes.

Well, to make sure that the cut-up hotcakes were evenly divided to everyone, the village managed them. To start off, first the 'cake distribution official' would approach the edge of the plate and pass the cut-up hotcakes to the villagers. This was the result

of long years of thinking of how to avoid people taking them whenever they wanted, people fighting over large pieces, and weak, small children not getting anything to eat... The fact that the distribution official would sometimes lick some butter and eat some of the small hotcake scraps that fell from the plate was a tolerated side benefit.

And also, the people who took the hotcakes and ate them plain were a minority faction. Most of the people headed to the buckets filled to the brim with sweet honey.

“Put more on! Cheapskate!”

“No, no! We’ll run out and we need to keep some to take back!”

“Ah, hey! It’s no fair if you get both brown and black honey!”

“Ah! No fair! He’s eating the red fruit!”

“It’s fine. That much, that is.”

Each of them lined up in front of the woman guarding the buckets filled with the honey that they preferred. The woman was used to this and used the paint brush that she brought from the village exclusively for honey to coat the hotcakes down. There were three kinds of honey prepared. The three were the brown and endlessly sweet ‘maple,’ the black and a little bitter ‘chocolate,’ and thick, sweet and tart ‘jam’ which was made by cooking together red berries and sugar.

Normally, only one kind of honey was supposed to come with the hotcakes, but because the village was divide as to which of the three to choose, the lilliputs asked the owner who then brought out a little of each. And so, the time came for all of the lilliputs to eat their full of hotcakes.

“Alright! Everyone has their share!”

The lilliput wife who confirmed that then filled a jar that she brought with her full of maple. This was also one of the side benefits of the honey-coating official. They would be allowed to take the leftover honey and put it into jars or bottles to take back to the village. (Of course, if they were stingy with the amount that they coated with, it would be a big problem.)

“Huhu, for now I’ll be able to eat some tasty bread for a while!”

The Lilliput wife happily patted the now heavy jar filled with maple. The honey that this human made was something superb, and just smearing it on bread made it many times more delicious. It wasn’t something that stood out; it was only a secret treat of a small nameless village.

“Everyone got some right...?”

After confirming that all the villagers had got honey on their piping hot hotcakes or were eating them, the village chief said that.

“Well then... let us give our thanks for the blessings of the God of Earth and enjoy.”

Along with those words, the village chief bit into his hotcakes. A large amount of warm sweetness spread out in his mouth. What the village chief chose was the simple, sweet maple. It had a unique flavor to it, and the honey that was sweeter than the others seeped and soaked into the hotcakes that filled his mouth.

“Mumuu...”

The village chief let out a groan as he swallowed it down and hurried drank the tea that he brought with him from the village. While still leaving behind a little bit of warmth, the tea that had no sweetness to it whatsoever washed away the sweetness of the hotcakes.

“Fuu...”

After that, the sweetness left him wanting more! As he yearned for the sweetness that he supposedly just had, the village chief once again bit into his hotcakes! Piping hot, sweet hotcakes. It had a blessed flavor that made him feel like he wouldn’t get sick of it no matter how many years he ate it. Many lilliputs who were in the middle of their journeys became slaves to the flavor that they had at this restaurant and decided to settle down, and it was easy to understand why the village’s population increased in a blink of an eye.

“Father. Could you please share some of yours... I want to eat some maple.”

While trying not to dirty her beautiful clothes while she ate hotcakes smeared with jam, the village chief's only daughter pouted feeling a little envious after seeing her father. Of course, her favorite was the sweet and tart jam which her mother also loved but... she couldn't bear it when something that appetizing was right in front of her.

"Aah, I got it, I got it. I'll take a little from yours too."

On one hand while laughing bitterly, the village chief pulled out a dagger from his inside pocket and cut up his hotcake, and in return, he took a little hotcake for himself.

"...Umu, delicious."

He nodded his head to that flavor that he was someone used to... It was a jam-flavored hotcake that his wife who he lost ten years ago to sickness loved. It was sweet and tart... and just a little bit salty. If you looked closely, all of the lilliputs were doing similar things. Among family, lovers, and friends. Each of them were cutting up hotcakes with different flavors and exchanging them.

A strong, rough-looking Lilliput blacksmith that was two head taller than the others turned bright red when his noticeably smaller wife wiped some chocolate from his mouth.

A family that was known to have many mischievous boys were trying to mix together each of their own honey to see what kind of flavor it would make when their mother hit them.

A young man and woman who were usually always arguing agreed on the one thing that they wanted to eat jam and chocolate together as they traded half of their hotcakes with each other.

The previous honey-coating official was chattering with the other women of the houses as they discussed their spoils of war.

Having come to the village three years ago, an old man who was the only magician in the village was scarfing down his hotcakes without a care while his beard was dyed brown, and an old woman who was a priestess of the god of earth and similarly the

only one in the village who could use healing magic was happily smiling as she was surrounded by her grandchildren.

Such social activities were a sight that the lilliputs were used to.

—Thank you for waiting. I brought you your seconds.

Like that little by little, around the time the large hotcakes completely settled down in the stomach of the villagers, the owner brought out another plate, and the children with a growing appetite, the youths who have yet to have their fill, and the adults that were filled with gluttony once again swarmed down with a cheer.

Even for the lilliputs who made sure everyone took their hotcakes with good manners the first time, it was a different story for the second time. To make sure the old people and the children who were already full from the first plate didn't lay their hands on it, victory came to the fastest.

(I'm also someone taken by the years.)

The village chief patted his belly in satisfaction as he warmly watched over the young people who were arguing while each of them picked up pieces of hotcake and cover it with their favorite honey. The appearance of the lively villagers was the very appearance of the village that he desperately fought to protect. The eyes of the village chief when he looked at that appearance was similar to how his eyes looked when he looked at his daughter when she was still young.

“Well then, owner. Thanks for taking care of us!”

After making sure that everyone had finished eating the hotcakes and the plate didn't have a single crumb, the village chief said that to the owner in a loud voice.

—You're welcome. Anyway, get on once again please.

The owner was also used to this, and when he lowered the tray, the lilliputs got on. And so, he repeatedly carried the lilliputs who now had the weight of two plates of hotcakes in them than when they first came in and let them off in the area around the entrance.

—Well, I'll be waiting for your return.

As he said that, the owner opened the door slightly for them.

“Alright! Everyone’s here right!”

“Yep!”

After making sure, the lilliputs all moved out at once to the opening outside of the door. The lilliputs who were gathered at the entrance of the door disappeared outside in the blink of an eye, and there was no signs of lilliputs left in the restaurant.

“Seriously though, there’s always a lot of them each time.”

After seeing them all disappear, the owner silently muttered that. Before... when they just started to come to the restaurant, he had the feeling that there was be about half... no, one third of amount of them than there was today. In the first place, when was it that he couldn’t carry them all in one trip? While thinking that, the owner returned to the kitchen.

“I bet in time, small people with wings will come here too.

Suddenly, he thought of that. He had seen residents of the Other World who had wings and large amounts small people like before started to come here as well. But still, he had yet to see small people with wings.

“...Well, I guess there aren’t any.”

In the first place, with the physical strength of small people, they couldn’t open the door unless there were quite the number of them. That being the case, there couldn’t be any small people who could do that besides that village. While fixing his train of thought, he returned to work.

...The owner still did not know. That in the future, the day would come where a flock of small people with wings called faeries would become regulars as well.

CHAPTER 15

GINGER PORK

While covered in sweat, the young hunter Yuuto looked down from the treetops at a one-horned boar which collapsed with a thud. Taro, who was right under Yuuto, energetically growled and barked at the one-horned boar as if to make sure.

After that, the one-horned boar didn't even twitch or move. Piercing the bottom of its neck was the arrow that Yuuto recently shot... and inside the wide, poisonous arrow was a fast-acting poison belonging to hunters from the mountainous province that caused a severe paralysis when it entered the bloodstream but it didn't leave any trace of poison in the meat.

(Not yet, don't be negligent... 'A dying boar will kill the hunter before it dies.')

Yuuto remembered the words of his master, a middle-aged man who was skilled enough to kill a bear with just a bow, and he stifled his urge to check whether it was dead or alive. The one-horned boar was a tough opponent. They were different from the rabbits, deer, wild bird, foxes, and weasels that nobles hunted as a hobby. One-horned boars were prominent, wild beasts that had a thick, short 'dangerous weapon' growing from them, and they were freaks of nature that could repel a head-on spear blow from a samurai covered in heavy armor and take them down horse and all.

There were as many outstanding hunters and samurai that were sent to the realm of the dead after having the tables turned on them by a one-horned boar as there were stars in the sky. Right now, the tree that Yuuto had taken his position in had just taken a single hit from the boar a little while ago and was a little cracked.

Being negligent was forbidden.

...And after waiting for a long time. Yuuto jumped down from the tree filled with determination. Holding his bow under his arm and pairing it up with an arrow from his quiver, he approached the one-horned boar carefully and slowly. And then he tried to confirm that it had completely passed away and would never move again...

“I did it! I finally took it down! We did it! Taro! Now I’m fully-fledged as well!”

Yuuto let out a yell of joy. Now that he had taken down a ‘wild beast’ like a one-horned boar by himself for the first time, he would now be recognized as a fully-fledged hunter. Now he would be acknowledged as an existence that could survive in the mountains and forests where, never mind wild beasts, but dangerous monsters would appear unlike the villages and towns that were blessed with the mountain’s blessing, and he would be treated different from the half-baked hunters that would hunt rabbits or birds in the nearby forest so they could sell them.

Sometimes he would guide samurai through the middle of the forest by request of the lord, serve as an escort to a merchant who wanted to pass through the forest, take requests to exterminate wild beasts in exchange for money which was different from just selling game. He would increase the work he could do, and depending on his skill, he would be able to construct his own house in the middle of the city, take a bride, and live a reasonably luxurious life.

The one-horned boar that Yuuto took down this time was one of the easier wild beasts to defeat in terms of stamina and physical strength when compared to bears that couldn’t be killed unless you showered them with countless arrows, tigers which made fights into a matter of whether the hunter would become the hunted, large serpents that could sneak by quietly and strangle you to death or reflect half-heartedly shot arrows with their prided, hard husks, or to top it off, the great rhinoceros beetles that could strike out with their giant horns. One-horned boars were fast but they couldn’t climb trees, so all you had to do was rain arrows down from the treetops.

But it was easier said than done. It was better to have it run off before you could deal the final blow than having your hunting dog trampled to death in order to lure it over into an ambush, falling out of a tree and then being killed thanks to the boar charging and shaking the tree, or running out of arrows before you could take it down and not being able to do anything... and finally making light of its near-death state and moving in close to deal the final blow with a hatchet only for it to turn the tables on you.

It was a common thing in the hunting world for half-baked hunters who confused bravery and recklessness to lose their lives when trying to challenge and take down a one-horned boar.

“It’s pretty big... With this I could get 120, no 150 silver coins for sure.”

As he inspected the bite marks made by Taro on the one-horned boar’s right back leg, he thought about his livelihood. If he used the money he got from selling what he could take from this boar, he could probably buy a new, powerful bow that was enchanted with magic like the one his master used. A hunter’s line of work was that if he lost he would lose his life, but if he won, the profits would be huge.

It wasn’t unusual for a real hunter to get a few hundred silver coins from taking down one game, but for Yuuto who usually at best could get a few silver coins from selling small game, this was the first time he had game that went over a hundred silver coins. Yuuto’s heart was in high spirits.

Yuuto was still young, and he had just become a fully-fledged hunter just a moment ago. He was born a nearby peasant’s son, the fifth son at that, and to make sure he would not inherit the household, he became apprenticed to a hunter. And so, he followed his master around to memorize the forest at first in order to develop legs that were used to hiking, then he learned the skills to train a newly-born puppy how to become a hunting dog, and finally he was taught how to handle a bow and became an apprentice hunter.

Following him was the hunting dog Taro, a dog that he got that was born from the hunting dog his master kept and a hunting dog from another hunter, and it took two years of training since he was born for Taro to become a fully-fledged hunting dog. One novice boy and one novice dog, after hunting countless dozens of small animals, had decided to challenge a one-horned boar, and after spending a month to prepare... It was a fine victory.

“Taro. We’re eating well tonight.”

Yuuto said this as he pet the partner that was by his side. One-horned boar meat, when compared to pork, had a particular stench to it, but even so, the meat was delicious and had a deep flavor that came from being covered in plenty of fat. Since today was the day that he became a fully-fledged hunter, it was a time to eat some one-horned boar meat. Perhaps he used his beastly intuition to read Yuuto’s mind but Taro’s tail started to wag even stronger.

And so, Yuuto dressed his kill as soon as possible. He drained the one-horned boar's blood even though it weighed five times his own weight. What he was planning to bring back was the meat, pelt, horn, and tusks. The innards would rot before he could bring them back, and the bones didn't sell for much. It was unfortunate but he decided to throw them away.

"Alright, that should do it."

Before long, he had finished draining the blood and skinning the pelt, and crammed the fresh meat, pelt, and the horn and tusks which cracked halfway into two separate large bags that he brought with him.

"Let's go, Taro."

He put the best, fatty cuts in a clean bag at his waist and raised his voice at Taro who was chewing a one-horned boar's bone and wagging his tail. To that, Taro barked in response and followed with the bone in his mouth.

"Now then, I have bring it back before it gets dark."

Even after draining the blood and getting rid of the bones to lighten the weight, there was still a large amount of meat on an adult one-horned boar. If he left it here for a long time, a beast would notice the smell of blood and come looking for it. In order to avoid that, Yuuto split the meat into two portions and lifted them on both his shoulders, and then he carried it to the nearby mountain hut that he made in order to avoid any beasts.

"So even with half it's still heavy..."

While saying a light complaint, his stride was light and there was a smile on his face. He was transporting the big game he successfully managed to hunt for the first time since he was born. That gave Yuuto a large sense of satisfaction.

"Huu. It's finally over."

Carrying the meat and fur of the same beast to the unbreakable, sturdy door of the storehouse at the mountain hut, Yuuto let out a sigh as the sun was about to set. Even

though he threw away the excess parts, the spoils of war from the one-horned boar still weighed more than Yuuto's own weight. It wasn't that far from the place where he took down the one-horned boar, but even still, that much distance was quite the amount of heavy labor.

"If I end up like this just carrying it to the mountain hut... I think I have no choice but to hire Sahae."

It seemed difficult for one person to carry this big game down to the town at the foot of the mountain. Yuuto would tomorrow morning go to the foot of the mountain and employ an acquaintance carrier whose arms and legs were twice as thick as Yuuto's and who would often take on work from his master.

(I can't believe I've finally become a hunter that can hire people.)

At that, he felt happy.

"Well, anyway. Let's have dinner."

It was at the time that he raised his voice that it happened. With a jump in response to the presence of 'something,' Taro let out a single bark towards Yuuto.

"...What's wrong? Is there something there, Taro?"

Seeing that state, Yuuto asked Taro that. Taro let out one more bark before running off.

"What is it? Did he find something?"

Yuuto followed Taro, and after running for a bit, Taro stopped in place and let out another bark. At that place there was a black door. The door with a picture of a cat on it clung to the cliff as though it were 'growing' out of it.

"...There wasn't supposed to be a door in this place... No, I'm not mistaken. Yesterday, I was sure that there was nothing here."

Yuuto remembered. Yesterday when he passed by this place, there wasn't a door. He was taught that being able to remember what was different in the forest was one of

the conditions to be a good hunter, and Yuuto who tried to remember to the best of his abilities wouldn't overlook such a big change. Not to mention a door that suddenly appeared.

"It can't be, one of those magic doors..."

Magic. It was a word that had little to do with Yuuto who lived in a rural town, but even still, that town had a few number of onmyouji living it and the priests there would often use prayer magic of the God of Wind that they believed in on the hunters. It went like this: whenever something strange happens it usually the cause of some magical power.

"Since Taro led me here it's probably something that's not dangerous..."

He knew that Taro, who was perfectly trained as a hunting dog, wouldn't bring him here by mistake. Yuuto made his resolve and put his hand on the golden handle of the black door... and opened it. It wasn't locked. With the ringing of a bell sounding out, the door opened.

"Uwah!?"

After suddenly coming from the middle of the mountains where dusk was drawing near to a brightly lit place which made his eyes dazzled, Yuuto reflexively blocked the light with his hands.

"Welcome."

A voice called out to Yuuto while he was like that. A middle-aged man's voice. Yuuto stopped blocking the light and once again took in his situation. There was a mysterious place. A number of tables and chairs were lined up, and a number of people were sitting down and eating something and many of them were drinking alcohol. This sight was as if...

"Is this place... a tavern?"

"No, it's a western... a restaurant. Although we do have some liquor."

To Yuuto's words, the owner replied, and after a pause, he once again welcomed this new customer.

"Once again, welcome. Is that dog there your companion?"

A boy that was still young who was around middle school or high school. By his feet was a well-behaved dog that was sitting down... Normally, bringing in pets into the 'cathouse' was not allowed, but if they were properly trained it was fine to bring them in.

"Eh, aah. This is my hunting dog, Taro. He's properly trained."

At the owner's words, Yuuto gave a half-hearted reply while he thought to himself. Putting aside why it was inside of a mountain, this place seemed to be a restaurant. And from the store's atmosphere, Yuuto felt that this place was different from the cheap tavern in the town where he lived at and was a high-class establishment where noble samurai would go to.

(Well this sucks... I didn't bring any money.)

He didn't know the flavors of what the other customers around him were eating, but an unmistakably delicious smell drifted towards him. It stimulated Yuuto who had yet to have dinner and made him think that he had to eat here.

But, he had no money. After all, Yuuto who was novice hunter had a light wallet to being with, and in the first place, people who weren't the same profession as him wouldn't even pass by so bringing money deep into the mountains where there were only animal trails had no meaning whatsoever.

(If there was something other than money... Ah.)

Thinking if he had something, he noticed that. The thing that was hanging from his own waist.

"Mister owner, I would like to eat here but I didn't bring any money with me. That's why..."

He took it from his waist and handed it over to the owner.

“The best cut of meat from a one-horned boar. I’ll give you the rest so could you please made dish out of it?”

The best cut of meat from a one-horned boar. Normally it was something that would be salted and given to a merchant to bring to the capital where it would be placed on the table of a noble. For a peasant, it wasn’t something you could put in your mouth unless you were a hunter like Yuuto, and for this amount of meat with the most amount of fat on it, the price would be about five silver coins. For Yuuto, it was a pretty high price for one meal, but at any case, it was meat that would have ended up in Yuuto and Taro’s stomachs. If that was the case, leaving the cooking to a professional artisan would satisfy the meat as well.

“...Boar meat, is it?”

On one hand, the owner made a bitter face at Yuuto’s proposition. Dishes that used Ingredient that were from the Other World were not served at the Cathouse by principle. The meat, vegetables, and the things that he ordered from the shopping district were all ingredients that he himself thought were delicious. And also, the things that were made on the other side were things that he himself ate by principle.

It was a service that he usually didn’t do, but the young boy’s eyes were glittering. Eyes that the owner had lost over twenty years ago. A face that was pure, reckless, and young. The same face that the idiot high school students from the neighborhood would have.

“...Understood. I’ll take care of how to cook it, but is that okay?”

To betray that was something he couldn’t do.

“Of course! You have my regards!”

“Wan!”

With the owner’s consent, Yuuto and Taro energetically replied.

“Okay. Well then, wait for a bit alright. Please sit over here.”

As he said that, the owner pulled back into the kitchen for a moment and brought out a tightly wrung cloth and glass cups filled with water.

“Here you are. A towel and water. Well then, cooking is going to take some time so please wait for a moment.”

Saying that, the owner went back to the kitchen again and started to cook.

(If I’m going to using fresh meat, I’ll need to make it softer, oh right, boar meat has a bit of a stench to it...)

Having eaten it before, he thought about what would best suit boar meat which had a bit of a stench to it.

While waiting for it in the meantime, Yuuto looked around restlessly at his surroundings.

“Still, this is a strange restaurant...”

The guests at the restaurant were a bunch of strange people if you looked closely. A samurai and a onmyouji who were wearing beautiful kimonos as if they belonged to the capital, and a samurai that was wearing eastern-styled clothing that implied he was a veteran warrior. That much was still fine.

But countless people who had different facial features from people from the Eastern Continent were there. The quality of their clothes and the grooming of their hair were all scattered as if there wasn’t anything they had in common. For example, there were different races of ‘elves’ and ‘dwarfs.’ And to top it off, there were a number of races that Yuuto had never seen before.

(Looking at it again... this really is a strange restaurant.)

While Yuuto curiously looked on at them joyfully eating dishes he never seen before, the owner came back after a little while.

“Thank you for waiting.”

A plate filled food, a rice bowl filled with white rice, and a brown soup were placed in front of Yuuto.

The plated was filled with thinly sliced cabbage and the boar meat that Yuuto brought. The thinly sliced cabbage was dressed with brown tare sauce and mixed with the grilled meat.

“This is... grilled meat?”

Yuuto, who thought for sure a soup where the meat would be boiled until it became soft would be brought out, asked the owner this, and the owner answered with an unconcerned face.

“Yes. This is ginger pork... A stir-fry of pork and ginger.”

While answering, the owner set the table for the one other customer.

“Here, I took out the onions and ginger for you... It’s still hot so be careful.”

He placed it in front of the one other customer who was convinced that it was delicious just from the smell and who wagged his tail at the cuts of meat. It was a paper box used for takeout stuffed with grilled meat and covered in tare sauce. Normally, food with strong flavors weren’t good for dogs, but it should be fine as a treat every now and then.

“Well then, enjoy. If you want any another serving of food or soup, tell me and I’ll bring some out.”

After saying that, the owner went to a different customer... and was told to bring out seconds, and then the owner went to go ask if he wanted the usual combination of okonomiyaki.

“This is, this restaurant’s cooking...”

Yuuto picked up his chopsticks while the drifting smell of sweet tare sauce and the savory smell of meat made him swallow his saliva without thinking.

“...Taro, you can go ahead and eat.”

He looked at his side, and the moment he gave his permission, Taro who was staring at the food while drooling saliva on it savagely started to eat. The sound of gulping kept sounding out as his tail never stopped wagging. It was with a vigor that was more than when he usually got the scraps from some hunted game.

(So it's that good...)

Looking at that, Yuuto unknowingly had his expectations raised while extending his chopsticks to the meat. He thrust his chopsticks in the plate that was filled with countless pieces of thinly cut meat.

(Uwah. This, It's soft...)

He didn't know what kinds of magical arts were used, but the meat that was supposed to be hard was soft enough that it was easily cut into many pieces using his chopsticks. Then he raised one bite-sized portion of meat that was mixed with plenty of tare sauce and vegetables. He swallowed his saliva at the meat that was glossy and reflected the light of the restaurant's lights... Then put it into his mouth.

"...Delicious!"

Yuuto let that word fly out of his mouth without thinking. It was a dish that was more delicious than any dish that Yuuto had ever known. The tare sauce was sweet and salty with a faint particular spiciness. Just the tare sauce by itself was wonderfully delicious. Its flavor was so good that if you just put on top of food that would be enough to call it a feast.

That was paired with the one-horned boar's meat which had plenty of fat on it. The meat was covered in some kind of fine, grainy flour, and that flour sucked up and mixed together with the tare sauce. When mixed together the juices from the meat and fat and also the texture of vegetables together when you ate it, it was extremely delicious.

There was nothing more delicious. That's what he believed... but his conjectures would be turned upside-down again in a few seconds.

"Uooooh!?"

It was so delicious that he let out a roar. There was something more delicious than this ginger pork... and it was something was eaten along with the ginger pork, the rice. Rice white as snow without any other grains mixed in. Fresh, fluffily cooked rice came along with the ginger pork.

The deep flavor of ginger pork and the simple, soft flavor of rice, this combination brought from satisfaction and a sense of hunger at the same time. Eat the meat. Swallow down the rice. Eat the meat. Swallow down the rice. In the middle of that, he would have some cabbage, miso soup, and pickles while he repeated those actions.

Of course, soon the bowl that was filled with rice soon became empty in the blind of an eye.

“Sorry! Could I get seconds of rice! A large serving as soon as possible!”

While feeling a sense of impatience, Yuuto requested another serving of rice.

“Coming up.”

The owner had seen Yuuto eat rice with the vigor of a young man a while ago and had already coped with that. He prepared a rice bowl filled with rice just a moment ago and brought it out. To the owner, Taro let out a single bark as he passed by... He wanted ‘seconds’ as well. That’s what it meant.

The dog and his owner were birds of a feather. While pleasantly thinking that, the owner prepared Taro’s portion of meat and rice. And so, the person and the dog’s meal continued until they felt they couldn’t continue eating anymore.

“Uh... Crap, I ate too much.”

Yuuto, who had in the end ordered three more servings of rice and one more serving of ginger pork, bitterly patted his stomach and headed to the exit. Taro also has the appearance that his stomach was heavy, and his stride was somewhat heavy.

“Taro, that was good, huh. Let’s come again.”

Although saying that, it seemed that Taro could only wag his tail back and forth in reply to his master’s words with the energy he had left.

He had heard of that restaurant's secret. A secret restaurant where he could only come once every seven days. The price of the food was drastically cheaper than what Yuuto had imagined, but the flavor was authentic.

It seemed like his master who made this area his turf would sometimes visit and eat ginger pork with a vigor just like Yuuto did.

"I need to thank my master as well."

Thinking about it, his master was the one who recommended hunting the one-horned boar here in the first place. His master surely wanted to share it with him. The road to the Other Worldly Dining Hall.

"Alright, Taro. Let's go to sleep for today! Tomorrow we have to hire someone to carry the meat, so it's gonna be a hard day's work."

Yuuto energetically raised his voice to his partner. To those words, Taro let out a single, firm bark in response.

CHAPTER 16

CURRY RICE

On that fine day, Alphonse was preparing to go out of the house where he lived.

Under the sun, coarse and awkward Alphonse patronized the face that was reflected on the water surface pooled in a homemade wooden pail while shaving his beard with his mithril Swordbreaker that was gifted from the king. He then changed into his best clothes with frayed hem.

The sandals that he made with stalks of grass seen on Western continent on a rainy day five years ago was changed into a pair of leather shoes.

Since he rarely used it nowadays, he usually hanged his mithril rapier as a wall decoration.

After cutting his overgrown hair, he then tied it up with a vine.

Alphonse was now ready.

He was heading out to a special place.

It was Alphonse's only hope, a place where there was a lifesaver.

.....And today's probably the last time he visited.

Because such a feeling existed, he arranged his clothes with more care today.

"...Alright, this is it."

After he was ready, Alphonse put 1 horizontal scratch on the wall, crossing over 6 vertical scratches.

This simple proof represented Alphonse's "special day".

He did not know how many times he counted for this day.

“Let’s go.”

In thoughtful mood, with the same words said the usual way, Alphonse left his house.

In a place where there was nobody except for Alphonse, only silence can be heard from a cave with walls so tightly carved to keep track of the special day.

Alphonse walked along a short road, reaching his destination before the sun rose directly above.

Overlooking the surrounding scenery, there was a small hill.

On the top of the hill where the grass grows sparsely, a black door could be seen.

Alphonse kept walking to his destination.

Without hesitation, while walking with steady footsteps, he swallowed his overflowing saliva.

“Aa, it’s been 7 days...”

As he’s been in solitude for so long, his thoughts leaked out.

He’s hungry.

His whole body was longing for it.

Thus, having reached the door, Alphonse opened it without hesitation.

‘Chirinchirin,’ the door opened with the echoing sound of bell.

“Welcome.”

“Owner! Curry! Give me curry rice!”

Responding to the owner’s greeting, he said the name of the dish that he wanted to eat.

So much, that he could not wait.

“Okay, please wait a moment.”

With a wry smile on his face as usual, the owner retreated to the kitchen at the back.

After that, Alphonse went to sit on his usual seat.

“Are you done yet? Not yet?”

Fighting his hunger and expectation, he restlessly waited for a few minutes.

Curry rice was the taste of soul for Alphonse.

It was not an exaggeration to say that he was alive to eat this.

The feeling while waiting for it was stronger than anything.

While thinking of curry rice, he did not pay any attention to the sound of his surroundings.

The one thing he expected the most in the restaurant was the curry rice.

“Sorry I made you wait. It’s curry rice.”

And after 5 minutes, it is finally placed before Alphonse.

Curry rice was served on a large plate.

Heaped on the pile of white rice was brown roux with large pieces of ingredients on it.

Filled in a small pot, was a crimson fukujinzuke.¹

A cup filled with plenty of lemon water to remove bad taste.

A large silver spoon which reflected the light.

Perfectly prepared table. Dinner for the first time in 7 days.

Alphonse loved it and would never stop. A pungent aroma of plenty spices wafted onto his nose. From the morning, he had prepared for this and had not eaten anything yet.

“Yo ~ shi, Yoshi.”

Nodding in satisfaction, he took the silver spoon and gently scooped the pile of curry in front of him.

Roux with plenty of meat and vegetables, pure white rice.

He gently brought the spoon to his mouth... he then chewed.

Spicy.

The first thing he tasted was the heat.

The spices that are valuable in the principality of his hometown were used aplenty, the spicy mixture with exquisite balance attacked Alphonse.

When he first ate it, he was surprised at the heat. Now that Alphonse knew what curry was about, he chewed it thoroughly while enjoying it.

Then, other tastes than heat started to burst one after another.

A distinctive sweetness that appeared due to the white rice.

The large pieces of pork that were stewed softly had no smell and its fat had melted while they were boiled.

The taste of Oranie² that was fully dissolved in the sauce, along with the pieces of Oranie that was simmered later and retained their original shapes, sweetly intermingled with the sauce.

Orange Caryute³ and a vegetable that Alphonse did not know... the other guests said that it was Baron's fruit; they were hot and soft in the curry.

They melted together in his mouth and created one taste.

“Umu, it's good.”

When he thought about this store, the store became finer and it changed a lot, but this wonderful taste did not change.

The first bite was tasted, the mouth wanted the next bite..... while he devoured the curry greedily, he occasionally snacked on the fukujinzuke and the lemon water.

Due to the hot roux, sweat started to form on Alphonse's forehead.

But his hands did not stop, he could not stop.

He scooped the curry to his mouth repeatedly.

Yes, this was curry rice.

Spicy, mingled with more than one flavor became an overwhelming deliciousness, which satisfied the stomach.

This was why Alphonse loved curry rice.

In the past, he heard from the former owner that curry rice is one of the most popular youshoku⁴ in the other world.

It's understandable.

It was presumptuous to compare it to meat or fish that was just baked or boiled with salt and raw fruits and nuts.

(Even after eating it for 1,000 times... I do not get bored of it.)

While chewing on a mouthful of curry, he remembered when he first visited the shop.

Lucky or not, when he first found the door and came to the restaurant, he had not eaten anything decent for 3 days. He had money, so he asked the former owner to swiftly cook for him as he is hungry while giving him gold coins.

The former owner said,

“Well, if it’s curry I can serve it right away, is that okay?”

And he met curry rice.

The unknown delicious dish that he tasted at 35 years old, the spiciness stimulated the appetite; he could vividly recall that he was struck by an amazing momentum.

And he had visited this store for 1,000 times.

Surviving for 6 days while awaiting the 7th day, he then devoured the curry at the 7th day.

“Yes, after all curry rice is supreme. Teriyaki and omurice are heresy.....”

Recalling that old story, that thought had not changed from that time.

How many years ago did they argue about that?

No matter what other people said, rice was best eaten with curry.

It was an unshaken truth.

“Fu ~u...”

And after 10 minutes, he finished eating a plate of curry rice.

“So, you’re still eating.”

An acquaintance who was watching... Roast Cutlet said that to Alphonse.

He’s still hungry. He asked the owner for a refill. Of course, in a large helping.

With a napkin, he wiped the roux from his mouth while waiting.

“Yareyare. You really love curry don’t you? You did not get tired of it.”

“Tired? The possibilities of curry are endless. Why don’t you try curry cutlet once in a while. That’s also good. More than eating it as is.”

For the time being his hunger was satisfied, Alphonse jokingly said that to Roast Cutlet.

For Alphonse, the cuisine of this store was roughly divided into two types.

One that does not match curry, and one that does.

Cutlets and other fried foods match with curry.

The combination with loin cutlet was especially good.

He was serious enough to know that.

“I refuse. Sauce and beer are the best fit for a loin cutlet. There’s no concession.”

The old magician that is Roast Cutlet, stubbornly refused while shaking his head.

“Ah, as usual. More than that, was there anything interesting recently?”

Alphonse did not pursue the topic, and asked Roast Cutlet casually.

“I don’t think so...”

Then, Alphonse exchanged words as usual with Roast Cutlet.

Casually chatting with other people, including those from foreign countries, could only be done in the restaurant.

This was another reason why Alphonse loves this place.

.....In that place where he usually lived, he had no way of getting what he had until three days ago.

Enjoy it..... while tasting the second dish of curry thoroughly.

“Owner, I am indebted. Thank you.”

Eventually, Alphonse who finished the second dish of sweet curry stood up and told the owner.

It's a heartfelt world.

Without this restaurant, he would have lost his life a long time ago.

He knew that.

“Yes...? Thank you very much. Please come again.”

The owner replied, feeling a little surprised.

He knew that Alphonse was a regular customer from the earlier days before he succeeded the restaurant, but this was his first time he was thanked by Alphonse.

The price of the curry had been paid in advance by the gold coins long ago, so Alphonse left as is.

“Aa, come again.”

Alphonse, while feeling lonely when he was thinking about the future, left the store.

...Thinking of his next visit to the restaurant.

Two hours after Alphonse left the store.

Looking at the island where he stayed for 20 years, Alphonse gently sighed.

“Honorable General, did something happen?”

A nobleman officer nearby feeling tense, asked Alphonse.

A legendary general who was missing after his ship sunk in the naval battle against a monster that occurred on the way while escorting a merchant ship heading to another continent 20 years ago.

He was quite surprised when he realized that he was the only survivor, as the man had arrived at an isolated part of the ocean where no one visited because the island was out of any route.

If he was an ordinary human, he would give up living by himself a long time ago or would have died due to disease or injury.

But he survived.

He was burned by the sun, killing weak beasts to eat them following the law of the jungle, and survived for 20 years.

It was three days ago when the officer met Alphonse who was standing in the storm and stopping by the island to repair the damaged part of the ship.

And now, they were heading to the Principality.

If you think about it, compared to waiting for 7,000 days, it's a bit different when you're waiting for 7th day for 1,000 times.

Alphonse muttered while looking at the far away island.

"Yes? What do you mean by that?"

"No, just talking to myself."

Alphonse replied with a wry smile to the officer who did not understand what he said.

(.....I wonder if that door also exists in the Principality.)

Suddenly, that thought crossed his mind.

He had heard from other customers that the door was scattered all around the world.

If so, it would be nice if it existed at his beloved home country.

(.....I'll try to find it.)

Anyway, now that he was 50 years old he decided to retire. He had also passed on the family head seat to his son a long time ago.

When he returned back to the Principality, he would have enough time to rot.

Alphonse would think of using his time.

(Certainly..... there was a knight of the Principality among the customers.)

And most recently, the guy that Teriyaki brought back, recalling the delicious Fried Shrimp lover, was in the military of Principality, Alphonse believed.

Surely there was a door at the Principality if you search for it.

(I'll look for it when I return home.)

Alphonse decided firmly, at the ship on his way back.

...And after 3 months,

Alphonse was visiting the restaurant.

Three hours by horse from the capital of Principality.

In the wilderness where there was nothing, stood a crumbling hut.

“So there is one here.”

He saw it while muttering to himself due to his leftover habit from his solitude.

...A hut with a familiar, well-arranged black door.

Alphonse's appearance was different from before.

The rapier and Swordbreaker were still with him.

However his clothes were not worn out, and his brand new shoes were well polished.

His beard was trimmed neatly by professional trimmer, and his hair was cut short.

It was an appearance befitting a nobleman who was a former general of the Principality.

There were neither escorts nor followers due to his retirement.

“It’s surprisingly close.”

One month to reach the Principality.

It took two months to review his chats with the familiar “regulars” of the restaurant and to investigate.

Alphonse hurriedly opened the door while suppressing his eagerness.

‘Chirinchirin,’ the doorbell rang.

“Welcome..... oh? Alphonse, it’s been a long time.”

“Oh, it’s been a long time. But first, curry! Curry rice please! Quickly! It’s been 3 months already!”

The usual voice wanting curry said loudly.

Translator's notes:

Curry Rice



1. Fukujinzuke – one of the most popular kinds of pickles in Japanese cuisine, commonly used as a relish for Japanese curry.



2. Oranie – Onion
3. Caryute – Carrot
4. Baron's fruit – Potato
5. Youshoku – in Japanese cuisine, *yōshoku* (western food) refers to a style of Western-influenced cooking which originated during the Meiji Restoration. These are primarily Japanized forms of European dishes, often featuring Western names, and usually written in katakana.

CHAPTER 17

PUDDING A LA MODE

There was one princess in the Principality.

Her name was Victoria.

She was the elder sister of the current king, 36 years old and unmarried, and it was said that she would most certainly remain single her whole life.

The reason was due to a certain characteristic that Victoria was born with.

Victoria was... a half elf.

A replacement child. It was said that “half elf” was born only as a mixed race of Elf and Human born from the human belly which should have received only human seed, an abnormal phenomenon.

Though it was said that a thousand Humans could carry the blood of Elf and Half Elf, the characteristic rarely showed up. However, the truth was still a mystery.

Due to the race, it was not possible for the replacement child to have normal happiness.

After all, half-elves inherited strong magical powers from the elves and life force from humans. They had a lifespan of hundreds of years and continued to keep their youthful mid-teen appearances until they exceeded 100 years old.

It was an oddity in not only the elven society, but also in the human society. As such, replacement children were released from their society regardless of their birth.

Whether you choose to serve God with the secular relationships, or becoming a magician by taking advantage of long life and man's magical powers, or becoming mercenary... Anyhow, they couldn't pursue a decent path.

Among them, Victoria chose the way of a magician.

When she became 25 years old, she realized that she could only walk a path different from Humans even though she was a princess since her appearance had not changed at all for the last 10 years. Hence, she appealed to the former king, her father, to let her progress the way of magic by taking advantage of her magical power.

And she found out, that she was a genius.

She surpassed her magical teacher's skill in only 3 months.

She took only 1 year to become a court magician with active duty.

Until 10 years ago, she was apprenticed to the magician, Arturius, who was one of the heroes that killed the Demon God, and had reached the mysteries of magic after 8 years of research.

Two years ago, she was told by her former master Arturius to walk her own path and returned to the Principality.

There, she was given more authority than the court magicians and abundant research funds. After continuing the research of magic, she was given the nickname of "Witch Princess of the Principality".

However, there were times when she was absent from her research.

...Specifically, about once every 7 days.

In her room, sealed so that nobody except for Victoria... her “laboratory”. She was reading a Grimoire left by an ancient elf whose magical civilization better than the present.

(...Still early.)

Waiting patiently for a while.

Victoria’s gaze was on a complex magic pattern in front of her.

It was a magic with high degree of difficulty, which attracted “Entrance to Another World” that could only be created only with accurate knowledge and superior magical control ability.

Even for a pure elf, it was not easy to master. In this whole world, only two teams had made it, the team that she formed and her master’s.

The magic team, which was assembled to summon a certain existence, was still active, and had summoned it.

A black door with a picture of a cat drawn on it.

Victoria was standing in front of the door at late afternoon.

(...Finally finished.)

She was thankful that her younger brother could take care of himself.

She had a dinner with her brother’s family.

As opposed to an official place, it was understood that the invitation to the private gathering was preferred due to her preference of not going out to the public because of her pointed ears.

But why today?

She had a hunch that she's going to go out from the morning so she brought water with her.

Of course, it was unreasonable to inform her younger brother of the door's existence.

'Chirinchirin', paying no attention to the sound of bell, Victoria entered the door.

"Welcome."

"...Un. I'm here."

She said hello to the owner of eight years and sat on a suitable spot.

"Here. Cold water and menu."

She received the menu from the owner and opened the dessert section without hesitation.

(Today, I only want dessert...)

The food here should be quietly and seriously pondered.

While thinking so, she opened the menu and did not try to interfere with the others.

Yes, Victoria did not care at all.

Even if the princess of an empire that had been recuperating from illness for several months was eating a parfait.

Even if the apostles of temple of light, including half elves similar to her, were chatting while eating sweets.

Even if her mentor was drinking beer while eating Roast Cutlet since noon.

Even if the former general of her country, who was supposed to have died 20 years ago at the sea while fighting the Kraken, was eating curry rice with great momentum.

Victoria only had one reason to visit the otherworld dining hall. To eat delicious food. And she made her decision.

“Pudding a la mode.”

She only asked for the otherworld dessert that she had never stopped loving.

“Yes. Certainly. Please wait a moment.”

Then, Victoria saw the owner retreated to the kitchen and spent her time waiting while browsing the menu.

(...After all, my character.)

Victoria looks at the menu even after ordering.

A dessert menu written in soft and beautiful Samanak language.

It was “her character” to perfectly reproduce a habit of fine characters.

(I should have given only one piece...)

Also, she thought, looking at the letters on the menu that her teacher, Arturius, said to her long ago.

The “otherworld” was a world where technology had considerably developed.

Even just by looking at the interior of the restaurant, which was not wide, you could understand that.

For 8 years, she was amazed by this restaurant.

Roughly 8 years ago, she became aware of the “otherworld dining hall” around 2 years after she became Arturius’ apprentice.

She had the opportunity to visit when Arturius brought her along to the restaurant.

“Welcome. Do you want to write the menu, young lady?”

At that time, with a more youthful appearance than now, when the owner asked Victoria, she nodded.

She was listening to her master's stories.

"Then I'll rely on you. I don't like sweets that much."

As a result, the restaurant was able to add a lot of sweet treats to the menu.

However, the owner who was a resident of another world could only read and write foreign language. He was unable to read or write the words of Victoria's world at all.

So, Arturius had his disciple...

He ordered Victoria who preferred sweets to write down the name of sweets in Samanak language.

"Well then, I'm relying on you. Here, this is a ballpoint pen and paper. And..."

In a casual manner, Victoria was handed a brush from another world with an ink font that doesn't need to be sharpened, and a white thin sturdy paper.

"First of all, the old man told me that you like egg desserts, right?"

Another world confection that she ate for the first time, it was...

"Sorry to keep you waiting. It's pudding a la mode."

In front of Victoria, the same fascinating dessert that she ate 8 years ago.

A glass cup with a thin leg and large bowl.

In the center with brown sauce on top of it, a yellow object.

Victoria licked her tiny pink lips and picked up a spoon.

(...Enjoy it, the last.)

Thinking that, Victoria started from other toppings.

Fluffy, sweet cream made of white milk, enjoying the way it melted in the mouth.

She enjoyed the crunchy, sweet and sour Azar¹ fruit with red skin that the owner had cut imitating the shape of a rabbit.

Enjoying the sweetness of syrup-pickled orange, different from Azar fruit.

As it was easy to rot, she enjoyed the sweet fruit from the south that rarely appeared in the Principality.

Enjoying the cold sweetness of ice cream that was placed in a different cup.

They were all sweet and delicious. It's delicious, but... it could not compare to her favourite.

(...Now, it's time.)

Licking her lips again with the tongue, she attacked her favourite.

The centerpiece of pudding a la mode, the pudding.



This was the first dessert that Victoria tasted in the restaurant, and it remained as her favourite, the confectionery of another world.

Pushing the silver spoon on the egg-coloured pudding covered in brown sauce.

The pudding shook... and the spoon sunk inside.

Scoop it up, scoop the pudding as is.

A brown and egg-coloured hill built on a silver spoon.

Gently bringing it to the mouth and placed it on her tongue.

What spread over the tongue was the smooth texture that only this confection had, the distinct sweetness that contained a little bit of bitterness of the brown sauce, and the rich egg and milky flavor of pudding itself.

The pudding's body accepted the taste of the sauce softly; the sauce tightened the taste of the pudding. This, overwhelming combination.

Victoria continued to be fascinated to it, that it kept melting in her mouth.

(...This is the supreme combination.)

Only now she could appreciate that she was a half-elf.

If she was born as a normal human being, she would not enter the way of a magician, and inevitably would not reach this restaurant.

If she was an elf who cannot tolerate eating food made from animals, she could not taste this great flavour even though she was able to reach the restaurant.

But Victoria was a half-elf magician.

That's why she was able to find this restaurant.

Victoria was not willing to waste this encounter and will also spare no efforts to get it.

The Magic team that summoned the “door of the different World Dining hall” built in the room of the Principality was a symbol.

Victoria took a spoonful of pudding, and ate it.

Carefully, to taste this pudding a while longer.

But the end would come.

Victoria placed the spoon down.

The bowl in front of her was already empty.

She exhaled a sigh of satisfaction.

She would just have one bowl of pudding today.

She consulted with her stomach and thought so.

“...Owner. Your bill. And...”

“Yes. It’s as usual.”

Having known her for a long time, the owner nodded, and retrieved something from the refrigerator at the back of the restaurant.

“Here you go. As it is a dessert, please eat it today if possible.”

The owner handed out a square box with a silhouette of a winged puppy.

There were four custard puddings packed in glass jars inside the box.

Victoria always brought back “souvenirs” for herself back home.

“I know.”

Victoria nodded to the words that were heard every time. It’s a lie though.

She did not like to eat all of her favourite food in a day and spent the remaining six days in impatience.

...Of course, her countermeasures for perishable food were perfect.

“See you.”

“Yes. Anytime please.”

While being sent off by the owner’s words, Victoria opened the restaurant’s door and entered her room.

“...Well then.”

After coming back, Victoria’s actions were swift.

She went out of her laboratory and headed to her bedroom where any regular maid could enter and picked up a box from her bedside.

At first glance, it looked like a jewel box befitting a princess of the Principality, studded with jewels.

When you opened it, cold air leaked out from inside.

Feeling the cold air, Victoria placed the four precious yellow jewels inside the box.

A jeweled box that was enchanted with preservation magic to prevent rot with the temperature set to the cold daytime of winter.

Victoria who wanted to enjoy the puddings for a long time somehow developed the box.

“...Fluffy.”

Victoria smiled as she placed the pudding inside and closed the lid.

With this, she could enjoy the pudding once every two days.

It was a precious smile of the Witch Princess of the Principality usually known to be expressionless.

Victoria used it to express that pleasure.

Translator's notes:

Pudding a la Mode



1. Azar fruit – Apple.

CHAPTER 18

HAMBURGER

Jack was running joyfully at the outskirts of a town in a small country.

“Hehe... I finally got 9 coppers.”

Jack was rushing ahead while paying attention to the ‘chari-chari’ sound of the copper coins at this bosom.

Helping out at the house, getting rid of giant rats at the rafters with a machete, or guiding travelers; earning money little by little.

For seven days, Jack collected money, and then went to eat using it.

Before lunch. The time before lunch was the usual time to go.

At the usual place, the usual two people had already arrived.

“Hi, Jack-kun, good afternoon.”

Kent who was the son of the magician living in the town.

“That’s good. If you are late, we would leave you behind.”

Terry, who was a year older than the other two, was the third son of the mayor.

Only these three naughty kids knew about “that place” in the town.

“Oops. That was close. Ok, let’s go now.”

“Yeah.” “Aa.”

And the three of them departed.

An old well that was no longer used since a long time ago.

It was “that place” where they explored since they were young children.

“Kent, be careful. You’re as clumsy as a troll.”

“I know. You don’t have to say that every time.”

While striking a joke, they dropped the rope and descended down the well.

No one else at the town knows what’s at the bottom of the well.

“Okay, I’m opening it.” “Ou.” “Yeah.”

Only once in 7 days, a door leading to another world appeared.

When Terry opened the door on behalf of his friends, there was a tinkling sound of a bell.

“Welcome. Please have a seat.”

The owner, who was in the middle of guiding the regulars, said to them while holding a tray of liliputs.

“Ou.” “Yeah.” “Aa.”

The three of them were used to it and replied briefly. They sat at a vacant table and waited to order.

“Sorry I kept you waiting. What would you like to order?”

As soon as the owner came to collect their order, the three of them ordered simultaneously.

“““Hamburger set. The drink is coke.”““

“Very well.”

The owner retreated to the kitchen at the back while laughing a little to the overlapping voices.

“I can’t wait.”

“Oh, well. It can’t compare to the usual food.”

“Yup. Even at my house, there’s nothing like this.”

They carefully wiped their hand with the served hot napkin before looking around the restaurant while discussing about the best dish.

“Even so. This shop, there’s many demi-humans.”

“I know they’re coming from that door, but where do they come from?”

“It’s strange. Where in our world do you think the demi-humans that we only see in this restaurant live?”

They always thought of that when they came to this restaurant. The narrowness of the town where they lived, and the size of the world.

Magical doors of another world dining hall appeared all around Jack’s world.

And, not all customers were humans like Jack that “uses” the door.

There were many demi-humans visiting this restaurant.

An elf eating pasta with rotten bean sauce.

Half-elf magician eating pudding every time.

Drinking sake as if taking a bath, dwarves eating a variety of fish dishes.

Occasionally coming, halflings crazily eating a variety of dishes making use of their inborn stomach size causing a commotion.

Up to this point, the tribes were included in Jack’s common sense.

He heard about it sometimes from travelers or adventurers that visited the town, except for elves.

However, there were customers at the restaurant that he had never heard of before.

Lizardman eating yellow omurice that was covered in plenty red sauce for hamburgers.

Tremendous number of liliputs eating an extraordinarily large hotcake.

In the next seat, small people with wings eating crepe with plenty of whipped cream.

The woman eating a meat dish with boiled egg inside had a lower body of a red snake.

There were a lot of races that Jack had only heard from fairytales.

“Is it true that a dragon always comes here at midnight?”

“Oh, is that what your magician grandfather said? Wasn’t it a hoax?”

“I wonder? Sometimes they said that vampires came to the restaurant.”

A little bit of chatting.

Born at the same town with similar ages, the three grew up like brothers, and continued to talk with a friendly atmosphere.

And...

“Sorry I made you wait. It’s your hamburger sets.”

The owner carried their favourite as usual.

“Oh! I’ve been waiting!”

“It looks very good today as well.”

“This is the only place I can eat this.”

They took the dishes and put one each in front of them.

First of all, served on the dish was a heap of deep fried potatoes.

The seasoning was simply salt. It was freshly fried, and you can eat it as is. It was also good with the thick red sauce placed at the corner of the dish.

Placed beside the plate was a glass cup of black juice named coke with a strange tube that was not made with wood or metal.

Ice was put inside and the cooled coke tastes like ale. Bubbles were fizzing out, and a layer of brown foam was formed on the surface.

And the main dish was the hamburger that was placed on the plate with the Baron's fruit.

It's their favourite dish, fragrant white bread sprinkled with some kind of seeds on the lightly burnt surface, and sandwiched on between the breads were meat, vegetables, cheese and some sauce.

"Uooo! So delicious-!"

"I suppose I'll eat it now."

"Terry, you're drooling?"

They couldn't resist the smell drifting from the fried French fries and the freshly made hamburger, and picked up the hamburger.

You don't need a knife or a fork for this dish.

Hold it with your hand... you bite it.

""""Delicious!""""

Their voices overlap.

The lightly baked white bread combined the fragrant seed on the surface with the sweet, soft taste of the bun. The roundly sliced red vegetables were firmly ripe and sweet and sour.

The thinly sliced and slightly burnt oranie were sweetly melting inside their mouth.

The thin green leaf spread under the meat provided a crispy texture while the pickled vegetables accented the meat patty.

In addition, the sauce that coloured the hamburger were a combination of sour red sauce, pungent yellow sauce, and white sauce with soft sourness different from the red sauce¹. The hot temperature of the meat caused the cheese sandwiched in between to melt.

Yes, a hamburger was a meat dish.

Though the meat was surrounded by various toppings, its overwhelming taste struck their tongues.

Finely chopped meat shaped into a patty and grilled, the meat was so soft and tender that you can easily bite it apart. Once you chew on it, the meat juices overflow in your mouth.

Simple delicious gravy made using meat fat. The simplicity of the seasoning, a combination of salt and spices, brought out the taste of the meat.

Along with the bread, vegetables and cheese, the sublime combination made hamburger into a finished dish.

After one shout, while Jack was devouring his hamburger greedily, the other two took their time eating.

“Un. Delicious. I wonder how this is made.”

While drinking the coke in the glass cup, Kent tilted his head.

The black juice emitted bubbles like ale, and yet did not taste like alcohol.

It seemed that by combining various materials, a refreshing sweet and sour taste was created.

According to the teacher's story, there seems to be a spring in which bubble springs out in the onsen ground etc. But was it used?

"Umu. Again the food here is fried using good oil."

Terry dipped the French fries into the red sauce.

Freshly fried in oil, it crumbled in the mouth. The seasoning only used salt.

He heard from his tutor that it was a common dish in an Empire far away. The reason why it was so good is because the oil used had high purity, and the ones with stinking smell was not used.

If you thought about it, there were a few customers who had higher standings than the country boys.

Of course, the restaurant used good cooking materials comparable to upscale restaurants at the city. Their palates were satisfied.

...Comparatively, it was a mystery that the food could be afforded by the allowance of children like Jack and Terry.

The three of them finished eating their food in no time and drank their juice.

They always ordered a set of hamburgers and some additional food.

"I'll have French fries."

Terry wiped the red sauce from his lips.

“Well then I’d like another coke. I’m still thirsty.”

Kent held the cup that contained the coke.

“Another serving of hamburger!”

While Jack behaved badly, licking the sauce on his fingertips.

“Okay.”

With a wry smile, the owner replied to the three boys.

Come to think of it, there were a group of boys and girls around their age who used to eat hot dogs a long time ago.

“Fuu... I’m full.”

“It was delicious.”

“Yes. The food here is different from others.”

After finishing their food, the three satisfied boys stood up.

“Uncle! I’m putting the money here.”

With a jingling sound, they place the money they owed.

They opened the door and went back to the bottom of the old well.

“Alright! I ate what I want, so I’m going back home.”

“Yup. I have training to do.”

“Aa. It’s time to return back home.”

The three people had promised.

When all of them were 15 years old and recognized as independent adults, they would leave the town and become adventurers.

As a result of visiting the otherworld dining hall, their curiosity was stimulated due to seeing how wide their world truly was, and their determination became firm.

“Oh, but it’s a pity I can’t eat hamburger then.”

“Well, that’s true. But the world is huge. There may be more delicious food.”

“Oh yeah... but sometimes, we should visit our hometown. Anyways, the three of us are going to travel.”

While talking about their future, they climbed up the old well.

The day they became adults and leaving the town was just around the corner.

Translator's notes:

Hamburger



1. A combination of ketchup, mustard and mayonnaise perhaps? I can't really imagine that with sautéed onions and cheese. -.-"

CHAPTER 19

COFFEE FLOAT

The southern region of the Western Continent... in the Sand Country, magic was popular.

The Sand Country was covered by inhabited desert where most of the land could not bear anything and nothing could be taken.

Even if you looked at the entirety of the two main continents of East and South, when it comes to the land size, no country was larger than the Sand Country. However, their national strength was considered as moderate strength at the Western Continent.

Their people lived beside the abundant sea, near the river, and at the sea of sand by making towns near an oasis.

Due to the land, it was inevitable that their magic developed.

Magic was over a thousand years old, it was an elves' creation that was so popular that it spread all over the world like an epidemic.

It is one of the few ways for the weak tribes to resist the great nature.

As such, due to the harsh nature of the country, magic has a strong presence at the Sand Country.

A way to make fire at the desert without using wood, a way to navigate the desert, the means to get water to create life at the desert.

And weapons to fight against the deadly monsters that adapted to the desert and the zombies¹ who were travelers that died at the desert.

The Sand Country had more than twice the amount of magicians compared to other countries, it was natural that several caravans crossed the dangerous desert, and it was the norm for nobles to have magical knowledge.

Because it was such a country, the very recent creation of “it” had spread explosively across the country and became its specialty.

Afternoon.

On the sky, the sun continued to shine intensely throughout the year. The temperature of the neighborhood was at the peak and people avoided going out of the shade.

A young male magician opened his stall at the shade silently.

Pack the ground coffee seeds, a common drink in the sandy country, into a cloth bag and drop it into a copper pot filled with hot water.

The juice of the coffee which oozed out of the powder melted into the hot water, and the hot water was dyed dark brown.

Sugar, imported from an island near the Sand Country and was affordable even for commoners, was mixed into the drink.

So far, it's the traditional way coffee was made in the country.

“Well then...”

The magician's way of making the drink was different from this step.

As soon as the drink was made, he used magic and casted a spell.

The magic that generates coolness... In the country of sand where cool breeze had high demand, alongside with ignition magic, it was considered primitive.

The cold air was blown to the copper pot and its temperature cooled down considerably.

When it's done, take the pot and pour the coffee down the throat.

Cold coffee went down the throat more smoothly compared to hot coffee, and a refreshing sweet and bitter taste lingered in the mouth.

After finishing, the man raised his voice.

“Come on, come on out! It’s sweet, chilled coffee! It’s chilled well!”

Hearing the shout, people started to line up in front of the stall.

“One cup.”

“Okay!”

In response to the customer, he poured the chilled coffee into a cup.

Drink it deliciously.

“Kuha~”

The voice leaked out from the mouth.

Drink it during hot days, chilled coffee. The taste was exceptional.

Magically chilled coffee.

It’s what you drink when it’s hot; shooting down common sense that cold coffee was acidic and tasted bad.

The coffee that was magically chilled at once was different from a coffee that naturally cooled down, it was good.

At the Sand Country which was a magical country, chilled coffee became a well-known drink.

Now a number of stalls were available selling chilled coffee in unbreakable coffee pots, moistening the throats of the people of Sand Country.

And, the inventor’s name was...

Near the desert, far from the capital city.

A young man was standing in front of a black door with a picture of a cat.

A young man with neat facial features, brown skin like polished copper, black hair like black pearl, and a trained supple body.

He had a beautiful figure not defeated by his luxurious appearance of silk clothes dyed with vivid colours and golden ornaments adorning every part of his body.

His name was Sharif. One of the otherworld dining hall's regulars that lived at the Sand Country.

Sharif was nervous.

(Is it time?)

The time was when the sun was passing through the middle of the east and gradually tilting to the west... throughout the day, the hottest time.

He usually visited at this time of the day... that's why Sharif was standing under the hot sun.

(This is not the time to think.)

He decided and opened the door.

While listening to the tinkling sound of the doorbell, Sharif inspected the interior.

(...Hmm, not today.)

There were a few customers at the restaurant, but there was no "girl".

Relieved, he sat at the back of the store, a less conspicuous seat.

"Here you go. It's the menu."

The owner was accustomed to it, without a word, brought a glass of water and the menu to Sharif.

“Umu.”

Nodding regally, Sharif inspected the menu.

The section “beverage” was opened.

While looking at the usual beverage line up, Sharif ordered his usual.

“Coffee float with ice cream. Extra sugar for the coffee.”

“Yes, certainly.”

After ordering, Sharif returned the menu to the owner and relaxed on his seat.

(It’s a strange place as ever.)

Around 5 years ago, while walking outside the castle town just because he was an adult, he found the door by chance while taking a moonlit walk.

The place when he curiously opened the door was the otherworld dining hall.

A restaurant from another world.

A lot of people from Sharif’s world came and ordered otherworld cuisine.

Sharif himself found a black door, and sometimes ordered a variety of dishes at the restaurant.

Visiting once a month.

The sun ruthlessly turned the world into a scorching land.

But only a few months ago, Sharif visited once every 7 days when the sun was at the peak.

...It was from that time that he got the reason to do so.

A tinkling sound was heard, the doorbell announcing another visitor.

Every time the sound echoes, Sharif checked the door.

(...Not that one.)

He heaved a sigh when he saw a half-elf magician who had come to greet his father along with her mentor before he became an adult.

While she was beautiful, she deviated from Sharif's preferences. Not only that, he also heard that she was around the same age as his parents.

Unfortunately, she was not Sharif's preference.

"Sorry to keep you waiting. Here's your coffee float."

While Sharif was feeling dejected, the owner placed a glass cup and a silver spoon in front of Sharif.

(...Oh dear. This is so delicious.)

His mind restarted, he gazed at the drink in front of his eyes.

Several hard, transparent ice cubes floated, cold coffee filled a glass cup with water moisture gathering on its surface, with white chunks... ice cream.

The cup had a tube with bellows inserted, so that you can bend it and drink without tilting the cup.

It is a beverage that can only be found at otherworld dining hall. He, who lived at the Sand Country, favoured it.

First, Sharif gently touched the tube with his lips and sucked.

(Umu. Delicious.)

The drink flowed into his mouth, and he inwardly nodded to the sweet and bitter taste of cold coffee.

This cold coffee was the most recently made delicacies at Sharif's world.

...Specifically, ever since Sharif ordered a servant who could use magic to make it for him.

The otherworld coffee that was usually served hot was very delicious and fragrant, but the well-balanced sweetness and bitterness of cold coffee was a special taste for the desert country that was hot throughout the year.

Recently, there was a phrase “cold coffee and chilled coffee are different”.

(Well, next...)

After drinking some of the coffee, he started on the ice cream.

Take a spoon and scooped a spoonful of ice cream. Contrary to the black coffee, it was pure white in colour.

Carry the ice cream to the mouth.

The cold sweetness spread in the mouth.

It melted quickly leaving lingering coldness inside the mouth, along with the taste of thick milk and eggs.

(The ice cream here is so delicious...)

While enjoying the taste, he thought so.

The ice cream used for coffee float was different from the usual ice confections that Sharif ate.

The ice confections were made by magically cooling various fruit juices and sugar water². However, they have neither the sweetness nor the smoothness like this.

In addition, there were several other flavours of ice cream other than “vanilla” that was used for coffee float.

At the otherworld dining hall, there were several flavours of ice cream available during the summer.

The price was cheap, each flavours were different, and none was equally delicious.

Although it was regretful, even in the desert country that prided itself possessing innovative magic technology over the “Kingdom” of the eastern continent could not prepare such a variety of taste.

As for that matter, his younger sister who ate the ice cream he brought home as a souvenir from the restaurant had the same opinion.

...It was a miscalculation to do so. Ever since then, she always demanded him to bring ice cream as a souvenir.

Then, he ate the ice cream that had mixed with the coffee.

Another visitor entered the door.

“...Mu!?”

Responding to the bell sound, Sharif turned his head to the entrance and froze.

“Gokigen’yoh³, owner.”

It was a beautiful princess who entered.

Contrary to Sharif’s brown skin, she had white skin and rosy cheeks. Light gold hair. Sea blue eyes and pale pink lips.

The clothes that she wore were modest, but made with high class fabrics and tailoring.

Yes, she was...

“Welcome. The same order as always?”

“Indeed... Though, please show me the menu as well. I would like to try out some parfaits other than chocolate once in a while.”

It's the reason why Sharif cautiously entered the restaurant.

He sucked the remaining coffee using the tube.

"Yup. I decided. Owner. Excuse me, but I would like to order coffee jelly parfait today please."

"Okay."

Sharif looked at her beautiful visage; she was sitting at a seat of another table.

...Because of her, the remaining coffee tasted sweeter than before.

(Fumu. She was a little late today.)

When the sun began to sink, Sharif went back to the Sand country, leaving the otherworld dining hall while holding a box containing three types of ice cream that his sister demanded.

(She was so beautiful. Today was a good day.)

Sharif tried identifying the female.

A princess of the Empire, one of the great countries at the Eastern Continent.

She was First Princess Adelheid.

She was prettier and more beautiful than any woman at his country, and the happy face she made when eating the parfait.

Every time he saw it, her pale face always became red with blood and filled with happiness.

Her visage enraptured Sharif and a flame was lit in his chest.

(I have to consult with my father after all... I need to ask Ranna's help.)

His younger sister was the apple of their father's eyes. The young, intelligent Sharif decided to ask for her cooperation.

After all the other party was the princess of the Empire. While the strength of Sharif's country was similar, they were separated across the continent.

It's better to have more allies.

(My fair maiden. Will you respond to my love?)

While thinking such a thing, Sharif returned to the palace.

A desert country located at the southern region of the Western continent. The day the prince of the country proposed to the princess of the Empire was not far away.

Translator's notes:

Coffee Float



1. In the raws, it was translated as siren. I was confused since sirens usually live at the sea so I just googled the raws. Turns out it's from a horror game. The image just popped up like a jump scare and I was shocked. orz T.T
2. He's talking about sherbet by the way.
3. I think those who read Reika know what this means.

CHAPTER 20

MORNING

The Sunday morning of the otherworld dining hall started with cleaning up.

After giving a large pot to the last customer of the previous day's "Special Sales", the owner tidied up the kitchen so that insects didn't come.

However, the cleaning up tended to be postponed to the next day.

10 years had passed since the owner inherited the restaurant from the previous owner.

Compared to his younger days, his cooking skill went up, but his physical strength went down.

He felt a bit old lately. He managed his restaurant by himself, especially during Sunday.

(Well, I'll be in trouble during Monday if I don't clean up properly.)

On weekdays, ordinary sales were helped by chefs in the kitchen and waitresses.

Special business would end after the owner finished cleaning up.

That's why at the usual time of the morning, the owner who was a man of habit, went down to the kitchen at the basement as usual...

He stepped on something.

"Uo!?"

A soft thing was stepped on. Surprised, he raised his voice and involuntarily looked down.

“...Who is this?”

There was an angry half-asleep girl who woke up. The pot of leftover corn potage¹ from yesterday was now empty.

“Huh...?”

A girl wearing a worn out overalls and a big hat.

From underneath the hat, a reddish blonde hair can be seen.

As soon as she woke up, the hat fell off her head, small winding horns which grew from her temples were revealed.

The half-asleep girl rubbed her reddish brown eyes for a while, and then picked up her hat in a hurry after realizing that it fell off.

She looked around with a relieved face... and panicked after seeing the owner.

“...E?... U,uwaa!? It, it’s not a dream!?”

After remembering what she did, she bowed her head and apologized... the hat fell off again.

“A, awa!?”

To the girl who fluttered around in panic,

“Well, calm down first.”

The owner regained his calmness and urged the girl to calm down. He then asked why she was here.

That was the first encounter between a girl... Aletta and the owner.

Rewind to the midnight of the previous day.

“Uuu... I got fired again.”

Inside a ruin with no door and holes on the ceiling and the floor, Aletta cursed herself while wrapping herself with a tattered blanket.

The gorgeous capital city of Kana Kingdom.

This city, which was said to be the most prosperous in that world, inevitably had a slum area.

Slum area.

The shadow of the richest city in the world.

Where poor people were quietly living, the darkness of the city.

As soon as Aletta lost her parents due to sickness, she left her “family” at the village and departed to the Kingdom.

In a poor village, it was thought that one woman could not make a living alone... in the end, even at the capital city; she lived at the poorest part.

Due to the fact that she was just a young girl with no connections or anything, and more than that, her race was a problem.

Aletta was a demon.

Demon.

The kin of the Demon God who tried to take over the world.

It was a race close to the humans, the dwarves and the half-elves. They had a non-human body parts and became a different race when they worshipped the Evil God.

Their strength overwhelmed the other races, and their magical powers came close to the elves.

But there were technologies and sorceries used to fight against the demons.

As incarnations of fear and hatred of that world, they were fighting against other races for a long time... Aletta was born 50 years ago.

At that time, the demon kin prepared a trump card to win the last fight... the resurrection of the Evil God.

However, the Evil God was killed by three humans and a half-elf before he could fully regain his powers. And then, the demon tribe's prosperity ended.

For the demon tribe who lost the protection of the Evil God, there was no way they could compete with other races with their decreased strength and magical power.

Some lived quietly somewhere where other eyes could not reach, and some came to live at human settlements by pretending to be human beings.

Aletta was a weak demon, a member of the demon tribe but similar to humans.

Her demonic trait was small goat horns that grew from her temples. That's it.

Otherwise she looked like a very ordinary village girl.

That was why Aletta used her hat to hide her horns to live at the capital... it did not go well.

70 years had passed since the war with the Evil God ended, so the criticisms against the demon kin were not so strong... to the extent that they would not be killed immediately if found out.

However, if the fact that they were a demon came out, they could not continue their jobs, and could not live anywhere else except at abandoned places.

In fact, Aletta had been fired 3 times, and lived without eating in a lonely ruined house.

"Uuu... I'm hungry..."

It was midnight, but she could not sleep due to hunger.

She had not even a single coin.

Until now, she had worked hard as a day labourer, but her limit was near.

...The idea of getting money by “worst means” crossed her head, but she hurriedly shook her head.

And, when she tried to sleep by force,

“A sweet scent...?”

There was a delicious smell floating around. Aletta raised her body in reflex.

It was not the smell of vegetation, at this time of midnight, the smell of food.

The little sleepiness she had was blown away by the smell and she looked around her without thinking.

(...Are? A door at such place?)

And she noticed, a black door was visible amongst the ruin’s rubbles.

(...Was there any? That kind of door.)

It’s the 5th day Aletta lived at that place. Even when she desperately went out to look for work at daytime and only returning to sleep at night, she would notice such a door.

Thinking that, Aletta tilted her head, but noticed something.

(The sweet smell... it came from that door.)

Plagued by extreme hunger, Aletta hurriedly approached that door.

It’s a sweet scent that she never smelled before... a faint scent that stimulated appetite.

Her stomach growled, accentuating her hunger.

Motivated by it, Alleta opened the door.

“...What is this? Cat... is it?”

Under the full moon, the door opened.

The door made of black wood with golden handle.

A cat-like picture was drawn on the surface.

If you look carefully, the door seemed old, but you could see that it was well-maintained.

She gently opened the door.

‘Chirinchirin’

“Kya?!”

She was surprised by the sound of the bell.

“Tha, that was surprising...”

Apparently a bell was attached to the door, and rang when Aletta opened the door.

There was a room beyond the door.

(It’s alright... Oh, it smells fragrant.)

A dark space was gaping open.

Just like that... Aletta unintentionally closed the door.

The scent of the food came from the back.

She slowly entered the room and gently closed the door.

(Actually, this is not good...)

Aletta's conscience tried to stop her.

She's going to steal.

She was aware of that. But...

"Sweet smell..."

She couldn't resist the sweet scent and warm food.

Aletta headed to the backroom while avoiding the countless tables and chairs placed in the room.

The backroom. It was a "silver" room.

(Wha, what's this?)

As she was used to the darkness, she could roughly see the room.

There was no sign of a person and a myriad of silver doors that she didn't know how to use.

(Funny place...)

The first room... was the room with the countless tables and chairs.

However, the room with silver doors was outside of Aletta's imagination.

That's why Aletta was convinced.

(Could it be... a dream, maybe?)

It seemed that it was a dream induced by her extreme hunger.

She was convinced.

When she thought about it, it was funny from the first place.

A room with silver doors, located on the other side of a well-maintained black door.

Such a thing could not exist in reality.

(...It's a dream, isn't it?)

Using that conviction as a weapon, Aletta boldly acted.

In that room, a small copper pot was placed on a table.

Opening the lid, the sweet scent from before wafted out from it.

“Wa...!”

Inhaling the fragrance, Aletta let out a cheery voice.

Inside the small pot was a soup.

The moment she sniffed it, Aletta's stomach roared loudly.

Aletta scooped out the soup with a big ladle that was in the pot.

(...It, it's a dream... a dream right?)

Aletta who found the source of the scent, deepen her conviction that it's a dream.

This smell closely resembled the “Knight's Sauce²” that was the specialty of the Kingdom.

It was a scent that Aletta smelled sometimes.

In her poor village hometown, she never saw such luxury goods.

While she saw it occasionally, she gave up after looking at the price. She wondered if it appeared in her dream due to her desire.

(The, then... isn't it fine?)

Aletta swallowed her overflowing saliva and scooped the soup.

The soup contained something small resembling a grain.

It carried a sweet scent to her nose...

“What is this!? Swe, sweet!?”

‘Gokyu gokyu’, she drank her soup loudly.

The still slightly warm soup... there was sweetness.

It was also salty and milky taste... it was delicious.

“Ntsu! Ntsu... Fu,fu!... Nu.”

It was the most delicious food Aletta ever tasted, and she hurriedly ate it.

Such a delicious taste... she was hooked the first time she tasted it.

A sweet soup with smooth texture.

The small grains that were occasionally tasted also tasted sweet and delicious.

It flowed through her throat, into her stomach, and made it, which had not eaten anything, warm.

She could not stop scooping the soup and bringing it to her mouth.

The soup, which was a leftover, vanished in a blink of eye.

“Fuu...”

Despite feeling regretful about the empty pot, Aletta sighed with full stomach after a long time.

This was the first time she experienced it, a full contented stomach.

It’s almost like a dream... in fact it was a dream for Aletta.

“Fuwaa...”

With her stomach filled, she was overcome with sleepiness.

“Nn...”

Aletta who was convinced that this was a dream did not hesitate to lie on the floor.

The floor is rigid but there was no frigid wind. Here, Aletta could relax well.

Inside the dark room... Aletta quietly slept.

“...So it’s like that. You thought that it was a dream.”

“Hya, hyaa... I’m sorry...”

The owner who listened to the story gazed at the curling Aletta.

It’s a casual gaze... Aletta curled even tighter.

(Wha, what to do... don’t tell me it’s a magician’s house...)

Aletta trembled due to her actions.

Originally, one of the world’s finest magicians hailed from the capital city of the Kingdom.

It was also the home of one of the heroes that defeated Evil God, the great sage, Arturius.

It was not strange that there was an excellent magician there.

And Aletta just saw the man in front of her using magic.

As soon as he placed his hand on the wall, with a clicking sound, the dark room was illuminated with white light.

The room which was as dark as the night became as bright as the day.

It was not possible for Aletta to run away, so she trembled and waited.

“Well... right now I don’t really care about the corn potage...”

It was something that he left for himself after serving it for the customers.

If he didn’t want to eat it, he’ll just throw it away.

“...I’m feeling hungry right now...”

Yesterday, after serving the red queen who brought home the large pot of beef stew³, the owner who was feeling tired only ate a light meal for dinner.

It was completely digested by this morning... he was hungry.

Of course he planned to make breakfast...

“...Miss Aletta? Do you want to eat breakfast?”

The owner asked Aletta.

He could not leave the girl in front of him and eat breakfast all by himself.

“E, eh, no, no, no, no, way!? I, I don’t have any money so I don’t want to further inconvenient you!”

“...No, even if you said so. You can eat for free. I feel uncomfortable if I eat alone... Above all, 2 people eating together are more enjoyable.”

The owner admonished the flustered Aletta.

“Re, really!? Then, thank you very much!”

In response to the unexpected warm words, Aletta nodded.

“Oh. Well then... wait a moment.”

The owner nodded and started to cook.

Put soft bread in the oven and take out eggs and bacon slices from the fridge.

Put a black skillet on top of the stove and turn on the fire.

First, quickly slice the bacon and pour oil into the frying pan to prepare a stir-fry.

(Salt, a little pepper with milk and cheese...)

Since he was making it for a “customer”, he made the egg mix better than usual and poured it into the pan.

Mix it quickly, make sure air is trapped in the egg, turn down the fire into medium, and close the lid.

Serve raw vegetables in a bowl as is and pour the dressing.

Place the hot bread from the oven on a plate along with butter, and finally serve the eggs and bacons on another plate.

It's finished.

“Here. It's a special “Morning Set⁴” that I usually do not serve at the restaurant.”

Aletta gazed at the dish placed in front of her and her eyes became as round as the plates.

(Thi, this guy is a great chef...)

Aletta knew that the dish prepared was more artistic than any food prepared by other cooks.

He cooked it so flowingly like a magic trick.

She had only eaten raw grass before. She could see that there was an assortment of eggs and smoked meat.

That, and bread and butter.

“Unfortunately I ran out of soup. I'll give you cocoa after the meal, so please be patient about it.”

While saying that, the owner quickly brought a chair from somewhere and sat down on it.

“Itadakimasu.”

Put your hands together and pray before meal.

“Oh, uh... the God of Demons. I have bread to live today... Ah!? Do, don't mind me!”

After saying her prayers, Aletta hurriedly denied it.

Aletta knew.

It was said that the God of Demons was called the Evil God and was still feared among human race.

“Yes? What’s wrong? Is there anything you dislike?”

However, the owner confusedly looked at Aletta.

The owner did not know the circumstances at the other world, and he only thought that she prayed to the Demon God because she was a demon kin.

“No, no. There’s nothing wrong... what is this?!”

In a hurry to mislead the owner, Aletta shoved the bread into her mouth... and was surprised.

It was too soft for bread. It was warm and slightly sweet like freshly baked bread.

Spreading in the mouth was a fragrant aroma of wheat.

This was a delicacy.

(Uso!? This is... this is!?)

Something triggered inside Aletta and she ate the morning set in a hurry.

Everything was incredibly delicious.



說到這個，店長第一次為我做的早餐套餐。

那個味道實在令人難忘！

每次回想起來，都會有種溫柔又幸福的感覺。

Unlike normal raw vegetables, the vegetables with sour and salty dressing had no bitterness at all.

They were fresh and not even a little bit shriveled.

Every time she took a bite, she let out a moan.

The smoked meat which was the main dish was also delicious.

It looked like it was just baked, a good ingredient.

Smoked meat with a moderate amount of fat escaping from it.

The amount of salt was just right, and the taste of the meat matched the bread.

And the egg.

It was a wonderful workmanship that used expensive eggs without hesitation.

The smoked meat was cooked in the pan first, so the eggs contained the flavor of the meat.

Even though it was delicious enough just like that, even though it was already a delicious treat, it was elevated into a deliciousness unknown to Aletta by mixing it salt and pepper, even milk and cheese to better taste.

And, the bread that she ate.

White, soft and sweet bread that goes well with any dish.

Although the bread alone was delicious, the taste jumped explosively when combined with other dishes.

Thus the two breads placed on Aletta's plate disappeared into her stomach in an instant.

"Do you have any money?"

She shooked her head so rapidly that her hat fell off her head in response to the owner's question.

“Hahaha. If you can eat so deliciously, it’s nice to cook for you.”

He was amused that Aletta ate so hurriedly, and gave her his bread.

...And after 5 minutes.

“It was delicious...”

Aletta sighed satisfactorily while becoming uneasy that she could eat something so luxurious in the morning.

“Thank you.”

The owner was also in a good mood.

Warm the milk in a pan, pour a brown powder inside, and stir it well.

“Here. Cocoa⁵ after a meal. It’s sweet and delicious.”

The owner gave it to Aletta who received it and became enchanted by the taste.

“...By the way, Aletta, you said that you were looking for a job.”

“...Yes.”

Due to those words, Aletta was pulled back to reality.

That’s right. This time she got a wonderful treat from a magician, but it was really fortunate that it was for free.

In addition, she also needed to desperately look for work.

(What shall I do from now...)

She deflated from the happy feelings she got from the delicious food.

“If you do not mind, in a week... why don’t you work at my place once every 7 days?”

“Batto”, Aletta raised her head.

“Work from dawn until midnight. Your work entails of serving the food and washing the dishes. I don’t have a dishwasher to wash the dish. With this condition, your pay will be... the price over there will be 10 pieces of silver coin.”

“So, so much!? Is that really true!?”

From the content of the job, Aletta was surprised by the high wage.

Usually, when there was no education and connection, the amount that Aletta who was a member of the demon race could get in one day does not exceed 10 pieces of copper coin.

This was a “silver coin”. Moreover, there were 10 pieces.

For that amount of money, a young girl could fund her living for a month.

“Yup. Well, even if you take a break, you have around 14 working hours. Also, meals are made 3 times a day. Well, it will be covered.”

“I, I’ll do it! I’ll take the job! Please!”

In a second, Aletta nodded.

This was a special fortune that the Demon God gave her from the heaven.

If she took this job, she would no longer die.

It was such a chance.

“Alright, a business agreement is made. Well, today is training. I’ll teach you your job, so remember it. Because it’s work, you have to take it seriously. Also, I’m going to give you a uniform, so when you come here, you have to change into it. I’m counting on you starting next week”

“Yes!”

Thus, a new “employee” was added to otherworld dining hall.

A waitress dressed in a costume in otherworld style with a small goat horn growing from her temple.

Her story is just beginning; she will be greatly surprised by the “guests” of this otherworld dining hall on her first day of work.



Translator's notes:

Corn potage



Knight's sauce – cream sauce



Beef stew





Hot chocolate







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